1998

Words and spaces: a story of an American Indian in the academy

Smokey McKinney
Iowa State University

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Words and spaces: A story of an American Indian in the academy

by

Smokey McKinney

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Rhetoric and Professional Communication
Major Professor: Helen Rothschild Ewald

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
1998

Graduate College
Iowa State University

This is to certify that the Doctoral dissertation of
Smokey McKinney
has met the dissertation requirements of Iowa State University

Signature was redacted for privacy.

Major Professor

Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Major Program

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For the Graduate College

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INTRODUCTION
MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES

Tradition (like everything else) is two-headed.

Tradition may raise its honored head
  Providing foundational security in time of chaos
  Defining a bulwark pretty much we all can agree to defend
  Suffering through and enduring genocides
    while brothers and sisters fall
    or surrender vital information to the enemy
  Spending private time on infants and toddlers (and adults)
    while they are still receptive to cultural conditioning.

Tradition can rear its ugly head
  Promoting caution, inactivity in time of opportunity
  Sustaining walls where no defense is needed (or where offense is)
  Dwelling on tragic memories in the extreme
    bereft of what sisters and brothers might wish for us
    were the current arguments less loudly served
  Exerting authoritarian control until youth (and adults)
    throw up their hands in despair and take in other cultures
    which they perceive as more relevant to their daily lives.

It's a good thing we have elders, and not just tradition.

Smokey McKinney, March 18, 1998

Handling more than one thing at one time can be very troublesome; it can also be a site of tremendous excitement and growth. Tradition, for example, has suffered some real blows in contemporary American institutions of higher learning, as a result of the postmodern turn. This development in the academy has opened up opportunities for alternative voices to be heard, voices like American Indian ones. Every Indian in a university today benefits from the ugly head of academic tradition being challenged. However, anti-foundationalism is not all beneficial to every American Indian, who more often than not comes from a community which reveres tradition, embodied in the oral cultural narrative and the community elders that still speak it, since that traditional activity is what defines the boundaries of their Indian existence.

The above poem, which I wrote when well into my own academic pursuit, points to the tensions that Indian academics (and others as well)

experience in their daily cross-cultural walk, and it reflects also some of the strategies I will forward in this document for Indians attempting success in the academy. For example, the poem calls into question the solid nature of a received truth or singular story, and the act of questioning itself—the raising of alternatives—is instead foregrounded and privileged. Welcoming multiple possibilities is the heart of what this dissertation is about. The poem also forefronts an attention to situatedness, a concern with context and circumstance that can reveal that one entity (in this case, Tradition) may be both right and wrong, depending not on its own innate qualities but on the conditions in which it is found. Rhetoric is the locating of an avenue of communication which is most appropriate and effective within the diverse milieu of any given circumstance's context. Finally, the poem acknowledges the importance and power of useful abstract concepts, such as tradition, but in the end it lifts up the People themselves as those most appropriate for responsible and authoritative decision making. This dissertation is about the decisions that American Indians finding themselves in the academy make. Such a path is always complex and challenging, but resources exist which may be drawn upon to find success and reach completion, yet not lose what is most important along the way.

I will argue here that the American Indian Academic must ever think, act, and speak in terms of **multiple** ways and manners. The luxuries of normalization and standardization in the university are largely elements that work against instead of for the Indian student, requiring him to expend extra effort in nearly every academic attempt. The Indian person who pursues a higher degree or who seeks professional success in the academy must continually make choices between variables established by cultural bodies and other social groups. This statement is also true of course about others (the academy is filled with multi-perspectives and alternatives from which to choose), but academic American Indians face a unique challenge due to the wide cultural space that exists between the mindsets and approaches of the mainstream society and those of Indian America. Despite the fact that Indian tribes are culturally very different from each other (there are, after all, more than five hundred American Indian nations), Indian people as a whole are even more different from

the mainstream, European-based, contemporary American society. This claim is not the topic of this dissertation, but it is an assumption upon which it is based. I won't enter into the debate of the nature or the degrees of cultural difference, but the fact of the wide chasm between the thoughts and actions of those in Indian country vs. those who commonly experience success in mainstream society is an important context for the issues I will address in this work.

Indians for a long time have been forced to choose between their own cultural traditions and that which the mainstream offered/offers. Most of the time little real choice was given to Indians, but even in those historical cases where the consequences of choosing were very great, Indian people still had the opportunity either to go along or to resist. Thankfully, things have changed. Today's social climate seems unusually benign for Indians, and although the really difficult choices may simply have become more subtle ones, no one can contest the fact that there are many more opportunities than ever before now available to Indian people: More possibilities for individual and group successes, as can be seen on the economic front. More chances to speak out as well as to be heard, as can be seen by the native opinions and beliefs finding expression in the media. More tribal and cultural resources and contacts than ever before available via the internet and other avenues, and many Indian groups now are faced with decisions about how much of their culture is to be allowed on those mediums. And, in education, more Indians finding opportunities to better themselves intellectually and to equip themselves for personal success as well as to aid the furthering of their particular tribal or cultural communities. More choices and more opportunities all around.

But the new opportunities available to Indian people both enable and require them to cross cultural boundaries, which brings a host of new challenges. What happens when members of one community live their lives under the constant influence of another which at its very core is different, in the way it thinks (epistemologically) and acts (methodologically)? Surely the very identities of people in such a situation come under attack, and cultural loss threatens. Indian people have faced such a prospect for centuries, and have seen traditional beliefs and activities fall and whole nations disappear as young minds have

assimilated into the mainstream. Today, as fantastic opportunities open up in the academy for Indian people, young minds are still surrendering to the powerful influences exerted upon them by academic methods and disciplines and other social pressures. This dissertation seeks to address a core question that faces every Indian person entering the academy: What does it cost to attain an academic degree?

My desire is not for an easier PhD, but for changes that make the route through the academy less treacherous for a person of color. Indians should not have to choose between extremes, and most Indian academics find such a dichotomous choice unacceptable. Many seek a compromise that will allow BOTH academic success and the maintenance of cultural understandings and obligations. Does "tradition" have to stand against "education," or can the Indian person find a way to successfully achieve both? I believe "Indian academic" is not an oxymoron, and that it is possible for an Indian to find constructive ways to attain a degree, though such ways require constant decisioning and positioning.

This dissertation is an account of just such a pursuit. The Indian Academic finds herself with a foot in each world, and spends a good deal of time determining which "mindset" obtains for any one situation and how to think or act or speak appropriately at any given moment. **I believe a conscious effort on the part of the Indian academic to think and act on multiple fronts is an early step necessary to achieving academic success.** Some of the multiple threads that I feel must be woven into a whole fabric of the academic career are a **cross-cultural** approach to study and research, a **cross-disciplinary** effort within the academic perimeter, **multimodal and cross-genre writing** in the academic reporting practice, the acknowledgment of a **multivocality** that is already going on and should go on openly in the university setting, the embracing of **multimedia technologies** and other alternative formats of expression (such as the hypertextualization made possible by computer-based mediums), and finally, on the Indian front, a welcoming and openness to **intertribal** collaborations. Each of these mixed mindsets can be strengths for the Indian academic, every one will be aspects of the Indian academic experience, and all find expression in the course of this work.

This dissertation is the story of an Indian academic—myself. It is a sharing of the adjustments in thinking that were required to complete a graduate degree. And it is also an account of the process of one academic research experience, especially the writing process, because to get a doctorate is to become a writer. This work, therefore, is at its core a description and discussion of the challenges that appeared along the way during graduate school, and how I managed to deal with them. My experience is not exemplary, nor even special; indeed, this work may be useful precisely because what I experienced is "typical." The extent to which my stories ring true in other Indian academics' experiences is the extent to which they are generalizable. But it is my hope that this sharing, as an attempt to get at and even critique some of the thinking that goes along with getting a higher degree, will aid others in their pursuit of the elusive top document awarded by the academy.

Dissertation Organization

Four essays make up the chapters of this dissertation, each one originally written independently, for different purposes, and for separate publication. However, they are ordered here chronologically (in the order they were written) to reflect the movement I made through my academic program. This overall process is further foregrounded and explained by a short narrative discussion (in italics) that opens each of the chapters. Those brief discussions situate each essay according to the circumstances that surrounded (and prompted) its writing. In the conclusion, I seek to pull together facets found in each of the essays (draw threads) that lead toward a unified picture of the process of an Indian chasing a piece of paper. It is most important to me, as will be seen by that time, to tell a coherent **story** of being an Indian academic.

The first chapter is a personal essay, a kind of autobiography (a mode of writing not usually privileged for academic reporting) which emphasizes the necessity for the Indian academic to come to some kind of awareness of the distances between past and present and between cultural spaces, and the necessity also to acknowledge and value where you have come from so that you can know where you are and make decisions about the future in healthy ways. The second chapter is a

research report that problematizes accepted research practice and focuses on the multiple cultural voices that demand the attention and loyalty of the Indian academic. The Indian researcher needs to comprehend cross-cultural dynamics that are at work when research spans spaces such as the university and the reservation. Chapter three is a summary synthesis of two voices in the American Indian studies discipline, and like chapter 2, this essay focuses on the multiple voices that exist in any situation the Indian academic participates in, but it turns from the context of the research act to that of reading in the literature of a discipline within the academy. Two largely oppositional perspectives are reviewed in this essay, illustrating possibilities for Indians to think and work within a discipline without demanding a single approach reign at the expense of others. Disciplinary and identity politics are an important context for this discussion. The final essay (chapter 4), a story theme analysis, also takes on the topic of Indian identity, and offers a narrative theory strategy for reading the texts of Indian writers and telling from those texts a unified story of being Indian. The essay argues that three themes (place, culture, and community) will be found in any Indian text, and will reflect and guide an overall view and vision of Indianness for Indian people living in the midst of modern American society.

Sequenced as they are here, these essays illustrate the working through of a process that I feel might have parallels in any academic's pursuit of a higher degree. Each of these essays builds upon what comes before, addressing "weaknesses" that are found in the earlier attempts, and showing academic growth overall. The first essay is an example of the kind of reflexive thinking that takes place early in the academic writing process. The second raises issues faced in the data-gathering stage of academic research. The third enters deeply into the existing literature and summarizes and attempts to synthesize disciplinary voices that have already informed the topic at hand. The last essay is a unified analysis that emerges from the preceding steps (critical thought, research, and drawing from literature) to form a sustained argument, the goal of academic writing and of education itself.

However, I'd like to point out that while these essays comprise together a representation of traversing the academic process, they do not together formulate a traditional academic dissertation. The reader that looks for a sustained argument established and justified in the early chapters and concluded in subsequent ones is going to be disappointed; if you're looking for my "best" academic writing, you should perhaps proceed directly to chapter four, which is both an extensive revision of chapter three and a "solution" to some of the problems found there. However, despite the similarities between chapter three and four, they are both included not only to show the process of a maturing scholar, but also to celebrate alternative paths to a unified goal. For instance, these two essays illustrate the importance of writing similar content differently for different audiences and purposes. It is my hope that my nontraditional structure as well as the content of the essays themselves, says something about the multiple routes Indians can and should take through the process of education.

Indian people have long pursued creative alternatives in their encounters with schooling in America. What has education done to/for the American Indian, after all? Indian historians write a very different story than the benevolent account favored by mainstream society and its educators. Indians remember boarding schools, where their hair was cut, their language banned, and far, far from home they learned to be anything but Indian. In well-known Indian-authored novels, young people return home to reservations from forays into white society, and in most of those accounts, they have been damaged in some significant way by their experience. For example, Leslie Marmon Silko's Tayo returns from a literal war (but the symbolism that generalizes for all Indians is clear) to find needed healing in a participation in a Ceremony. Yet many of those same stories have folded into them a quietly positive picture of education. John Joseph Mathew's Chal, after a long mental and emotional journey, decides at the end of Sundown to proactively to better himself...by going off to college to become a lawyer. James Welch also writes about the experiences of The Indian Lawyer, a novel he wrote after penning Winter In The Blood, in which an unnamed protagonist in neither fully resolves

or succumbs to problems that are part and parcel of his bicultural existence.

Stories of today have yet to establish any clear patterns of opinion about the positive or negative **nature** or **impacts** of the education of Indians. Those stories are still being written. However, the current Indian situation overall is one that enjoys a more positive light than even only one generation ago, and education, like many other social resources for American Indians, is named by more of them with a positive term: opportunity.

Indians are emerging from the woodwork, from those secret alcoves where it was necessary to hide and preserve whole cultures from a historical genocide. Cautiously at first, like people peeking and then walking back above ground after a natural disaster, cultural survivors are picking up pieces, finding each other, and coming together to form a united front that is speaking out for Indian people as never before, voicing an Indian agenda that looks out for Indians in ways that the mainstream finds unfamiliar and disconcerting (they thought it was their job to protect us). As always before, Indians are great adapters, and in this new climate of growth, since it is mainstream America in which we must make our way and since that America treats education and the educated with higher regard, Indian people are perceptively seeking degrees and positions in the idea-making environments called universities. The emergence of an Indian higher education movement (as seen for example in the growth of Tribal colleges and Indian studies programs at mainstream institutions, managed increasingly by native individuals themselves) is one of the most exciting things to see in Indian country today. (Even better than casinos!)

This growth and excitement is still a very young thing, however. Older Indians, who have seen many trends, wait for the pendulum to swing back to the way they have become used to being treated. But many other Indian people strive to change those patterns of ill treatment, by taking matters into their own hands. They are using education to build the skills to become truly self-determined, commandeering the role of writing the Indian story. And it's about time.

The interesting question is, what will that story be? This dissertation seeks to spend some time thinking about that question and about this one as well: what role will education play in the story of Indians writing their own existence? There are many interesting dynamics and possibilities here, and this dissertation, by necessity, chooses only a few for focusing upon. At least for now.

CHAPTER ONE
KANSAS CAME LATE

In 1993, I was asked to write an essay to add to an existing collection, What Kansas Means To Me, by that anthology's editor, Thomas Fox Averill. As a part of Kansas Day in Topeka, KS, that year, I read an earlier draft of this essay at Washburn University. Afterward an instructor there (who teaches their Indian Literatures course) took me aside and remarked, "You don't realize what this reading does for the campus. Some of those who have fought hardest against an Indian curriculum were sitting in the audience." She explained further that opinions of Potawatomis in Topeka did not include the picture I had presented—of an Indian reading an essay and going after a PhD. "Just the fact that you were up there and that you identified yourself as Potawatomi is going to impact some assumptions around here," she said.

Three years later, as I readied the essay for inclusion in my dissertation, Steve Pett, the editor of Flyway magazine, asked if I had something that I could contribute to a special issue he was putting together on Indian writing. I gave him a copy of the Kansas piece, slightly reworked. He suggested more changes including adding more dialogue to reinforce the narrative style, and replacing a middle section. (I had written a remembrance of a visit to Monticello to make the point that "home" consists of the retelling of many stories. Steve suggested a favorable example of a U.S. president somewhat contrasted my statements about U.S. policy. He was right!, and the story I used instead works much better.) The essay is therefore forthcoming in the next issue of Flyway.

The conversational narrative style evident in "Kansas Came Late" has now become a fixture in my writing, and the context for this essay (as well as the next one) is a Potawatomi language project that I have conducted throughout my graduate work as an activity external to my academic track, with my father, who speaks the language fluently. This essay deals with the importance of home to an Indian in the academy, a concept that will be revealed to be a major theme of the overall Indian story in chapter four. I seek to stress in this essay the situation of separation from culture, which is (at least for now) a necessity for any Indian who pursues a higher degree. The importance of a familial and cultural connection (in some circumstances, reconnection) during the process of pursuing academic success must be acknowledged. Indian writers must recognize that they write for multiple

audiences; therefore, multiple genres of writing may be required for Indian academics to fulfill their obligations to these audiences.

Kansas Came Late

An essay to appear in Flyway
Smokey McKinney

"*Ijé éjebyaygo.*"

I didn't look at him, only made an agreeable noise that I hoped would stand as a generic response, and kept on staring out the passenger's side window. However, my mind went immediately to work on a hundred-mile-an-hour search to come up with what the heck was the meaning of what my dad had just said. I was sure the root of the sentence was "*bya*," which means "come" in Prairie Band Potawatomi.

We had left the decent (gravel) road a mile and a half back, and taken a dirt track that runs across the top of the reservation. There was about an hour before our next appointment with the Potawatomi elder/ speaker who had agreed to help with our research, and Dad had asked me if I wanted to stop by the homeplace. I hadn't been there in years, but my positive response had been immediate. A brief visit seemed like the perfect touch to the work we were currently doing on the rez. This road was the only way to get to the homeplace , and despite my desperate mental gymnastics, I registered that the dirt today was surprisingly level and smooth; when it rains, most of these rez roads become impassable by auto. The track we were on soon transformed itself into a couple of tired memories in a field, and before I had finished my figuring on the phrase he had spoken, my dad had stopped the car at a barbed wire fence.

"*Ijé éjebyaygo*," he repeated, and then he looked at me expectantly. My grunt hadn't fooled him. He was testing me.

"Okay, what does that mean?" I finally asked.

"Means we are here," he said, and he got out of the car. "Or actually, 'So. We've finally arrived.'" Dad closed the car door to make his point. Then he crossed the fence and walked toward the homeplace.

I repeated the phrase several times before getting out, glad he couldn't hear me butchering the words as I tried to figure out the e's from the é's and the i's from the ay's. Learning Potawatomi is a slow

process for me, but it's important, an essential part of getting to know a culture I didn't care about much when I was growing up. And I knew it made Dad happy that I was now interested in the language.

I hurried to catch up.

◆ ◆ ◆

The homeplace in the 1950s

What we call the homeplace is a forty acre plot of land allotted to my nokmis (or grandmother), Gladys Pamnucknuck, in the early 1900s.

The view there is nothing to exclaim about. The first thing (about the only thing) you see when you walk down the hill is the rusted hulk of my dad's youngest brother's first Plymouth, resting in a single piece, like a monument to something. The rest of the land is simply a field, just like the fields next door or those a mile or two away, like any piece of land in

that part of Kansas. A field given over to pasture at present, with a couple of groves of scraggly trees, some of which push between and aside stones that used to be the foundations of two houses, at different times. The trees stay close to an indecisive stream which meanders diagonally across the field, causing mushy, low places, good pretty much only to the mosquitoes. Like I said, not much.

My *nokmIs* was actually allotted eighty acres, but the family sold the south forty acres in the late twenties or early thirties to build the second house when the original one burned down. Grandmother's allotment number was 602, and the land is positioned at the northernmost edge of the reservation, about four miles from the northwest corner. The Prairie Band Potawatomi reservation is an eleven mile square to the immediate west of Mayetta, southwest of Holton, and about twenty or so miles north of Topeka. A map in the Kansas State Historical Society Collections shows land east of the homeplace allotted to Ah-bwo-quo-uk (791), and to Pat-se-quck (757) on the south, but Dad says that while he was growing up there, most of the area got bought up by a family named Kennedy, white farmers.

About ten years ago, my Uncle Marvin (it's his rusted Plymouth) sold the remaining forty acres to another white farmer, a man named Brookens. Marvin is the youngest of Gladys and James McKinney Sr.'s children; we sometimes call him Uncle Baby, and we used to call him Uncle Dodo, but I don't think he liked that name too much. Potawatomis always seem to end up with a lot of names, hardly any of which they choose themselves. Dad says that my uncle offered to let him buy the land before he sold it to Brookens, but the only resource my dad had at the time was the GI Bill, and that required the owner to live on what was being bought. So the homeplace was sold. Nothing new; much of the reservation is white-owned (the inevitable and I believe intended result of allotment...but I'm getting ahead of myself). That we don't own the land doesn't make a big difference. It's still the homeplace.

The word homeplace itself strikes me as something of a curiosity. I really haven't heard anybody besides Indians use the word. Potawatomis are not originally from this area, and moving to an arid plain from a region rich with water and trees must have been a disappointment, but

they adapted; they made a home of it. I wonder sometimes, about their acceptance of this locale, and about what that fact says about the idea of home.

At contact with Europeans, Potawatomis were observed living along the western edge of what is now the Michigan peninsula. It is said they came there from the north, where they were known as Three Fires People, which also included the present day Odawa (Ottawa) and Ojibwe (Chippewa). Potawatomi is not the name they had for themselves; that was *NIshnabek*, which means simply, the People—what most Indians called themselves. According to some historians, the word Potawatomi translates as The People Of The Place Of The Fire, but in truth nobody knows its origin—where or who it came from, or what it meant when it was coined.

The European invasion first affected the homes of tribes along the eastern coast, of course. Iroquoian nations and other northeastern tribes, pushed out of their northeast region, came west into the lands of other nations, including those of the Potawatomi. With better technology and weaponry garnered from their contact experience, the ripples of the Iroquois wave wiped out some tribes and pushed hard at others. Potawatomis were strategically located, and simply canoed across the lake (Michigan) and took up new residence in the Green Bay area. They did well there and spread south to what is now Chicago (which is a Potawatomi word), and then back to their previous home areas.

By the 1800's, Potawatomis, by fact of their numbers, controlled large areas of land, all of which they lost to treaty and other thieveries of those confusing times. Under Jacksonian policy, most Potawatomis were removed along with the rest of Indian country. What is now known as the Prairie Band (my ancestors) were moved first to NW Missouri (the Platte area), then to the Council Bluffs region of Iowa, and finally to Kansas. I say most; some managed to stay or return to their great lakes home land. The Wisconsin (Forest Band) Potawatomi community and the descendants of Chief Simon Pokagon's band still live in the Lakes area and have loosely maintained connections with Kansas (and Oklahoma) Potawatomis. There are also Potawatomis who moved into Canada during these tumultuous times. This history has been recorded by some good

authors—James Clifton, R. David Edmunds, and most recently, Gary Mitchell, a Potawatomi who has written an excellent book of history which can be purchased from the Prairie Band.

The original Kansas Potawatomi reservation was approximately thirty miles square, not eleven, and included what is now some of Topeka (north of the Kansas river), and the town of St. Mary's as well. At first suggestion of allotment (the 1887 Dawes Act), some Potawatomis immediately acquiesced, and became the Citizen Band. The Citizens subsequently and promptly lost their allotted lands, which forced the government to once again relocate them, to new homes in Oklahoma. (Would it really be so hard to document that this was what the government had in mind all along?) My grandfather, Jim Smoke McKinney, was mostly Citizen Band Potawatomi, though he grew up in Kansas. In any case, my tribal enrollment is through my grandmother.

I ramble on about all this Potawatomi and personal history in an attempt to show that a definition of "home" is a little tough to get at.

If I'm asked where I'm from, I don't say Tampa, Florida, which was where I was born as well as where my mother was born and raised. I say I'm from Kansas, and for two reasons. One, that's where I've spent the longest single period of my life, and at an impressionable age (adolescence). So that's the experience reason. I have my own real memories of living in the Kansas towns of Holton, Ogden, Zeandale, Lincoln, Easton, Eudora, Baldwin City, and later on, Wichita and Bonner Springs.

The second reason, though, is one I'm just starting to understand, and I get a sense the concept that drives it is huge and mysterious, like the plains sky many authors who write about Kansas refer to. It has to do with being from a place long before I ever realized I was from there, or maybe even before I ever existed at all. It has to do with my dad, who grew up there, left, and has now returned, and through whom (as this essay makes obvious) is channeled almost everything I think about the state. It has to do with the feeling of being inevitably drawn (back) there. It has to do with this elusive idea of homeplace.

What is it that makes Kansas so important to me, when I am in effect now an Iowan? Maybe the answer lies in being Potawatomi and the

regard I seem to have inherited for the place that is the Potawatomi reservation. What is it about that area that inclined those first Potawatomis to adapt so quickly and so permanently to Kansas when they were removed there? Why were some of them (the Prairie Band) so resistant to giving up a postage stamp of land and moving on to the Oklahoma Indian territory when the federal government decided it was yet again time for them to move?

Sometimes I teach American Indian Studies courses at Iowa State University, where I'm working on my PhD. Last summer, I showed my Introduction to Indian Studies class the film Neshnabek: The People, and afterwards, a student asked a tough question about Potawatomi loyalties. Neshnabek is a rare documentary of the Prairie Band Potawatomi in Kansas. It has film footage from the 1920s, accompanied by interpretive commentary made by Prairie Band members in the late 1970s, when the film was produced by Donald Stull. In one section of the film, a man voices the solemn respect Potawatomis have for the American flag.

> We got the flag because at first the government tried to stop the religion. We worried that the government would take the religion from us, and we counciled, and sent people to Washington to explain the religion purpose and remind them that the constitution says morality and religion are basic to good government. We said we wanted to live up to our part of the agreement and we asked them to live up to theirs. The government agreed, and gave us the flag to show it approved. When we fly the flag, we say that the religion is under its protection and that no one shall offend another. When the flag waves in the breeze, it sweeps all clean.

My student expressed surprised at the Indian dedication to the U.S. flag and government, and the generous attitude those Potawatomis seemed to have toward the nation that stood over them. Hadn't the Potawatomis basically had their original lands and homes stolen by whites? Yes. Didn't they go through a painful removal process? Yes.[]As a matter of fact, a Potawatomi "Trail of Death" has been documented in which 859 Menominee Band Potawatomis were forced to walk from Indiana to Kansas; nearly 200 perished, more than half of them children. Furthermore, hadn't Potawatomis been forced to live in a foreign,

desolate land? Well, yes, compared to where they'd come from. Hadn't their children been taken away to boarding schools and brainwashed and assimilated? Yes. Weren't they still enduring misunderstanding and prejudice and discrimination? Yes. Then why in the world would these Potawatomis quietly and firmly accept the American flag, the very symbol of the government that tore their world apart, and make of it a sacred object representing their own religion? How could they be so accepting of the lot they were handed?

I don't know the answers to these questions. Intellectually or logically, no reason at all exists for a loyalty—but it is there. Some writers in the discipline of Indian Studies have noted a respect native people had for any nation that could triumph over them in warfare. If this nation was so powerful, an Indian might have reasoned, surely it was more capable of taking care of the land and of the people in its care. There are some tremendous ironies here that are beyond the scope of this essay. I am simply satisfied to note that the movie, Neshnabek: The People, attests to the Prairie Band Potawatomi's ability to **adapt**, to make the best of the situation which they were given. They were homeless when they came to Kansas. But when the time came to be removed once again, they resisted; Kansas had become their home. How far away does a Potawatomi need to be to not feel the impact of this influence?

I found a piece of Potawatomi Kansas as far away as Washington D.C., while traveling there in the summer of 1994. I walked into the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of American History and asked at the research desk to see the Potawatomi artifacts. I had found none in the public museums there on the mall, but a friend of mine had told me he had been allowed to view cabinets upon cabinets of Ponca pipes and other items tucked away in a controlled environment somewhere. The museum volunteers had a hard time understanding my request, but finally got me on the phone with a researcher in the appropriate area. Her first question was pointed.

"You didn't make a prior appointment? Why not?"

I was following the method described by my Ponca friend, premised on Indian rights of access to federal repositories of cultural items provided, at least in part, by the NAGPRA legislation. But I figured

she neither knew my friend nor would respond well to a forceful approach, so I simply murmured an apology and politely asked again if there were any chance I could take a look while in town. The politeful tack seemed to work; she softened noticeably.

"I just don't think there's time to....Well, hold on a second." She paused, worked at a computer keyboard somewhere, then said, "Well, I guess it's okay, if you want to come out here...since there's only one artifact listed in the database."

Only one?

Nevertheless, I waited for and then rode a Smithsonian shuttle van to a distant southern Washington suburb, where they had covertly located a storage and research facility within an otherwise all residential area. I signed in (in the forty-five minutes that had transpired, my name had magically made it's way onto the list owned by the security guard at the front desk), waited some more for the researcher, then was taken to a far corner of the well-air-conditioned building. I was handed a lone index card of information on the artifact, which simply reported the date it was acquired by the Smithsonian (1869), that it was from Kansas, and a description of the repair that had been done by the museum (metal bands along each side), since the artifact had at some point been damaged.

The researcher was unable to provide more information, but simply handed me a pair of white knit gloves and led me down more hallways and through several heavy doors, each with their own key-coded access panels. The last one opened into a huge room just like that I had visualized from my friend's description. At one of the myriad six-foot metal cabinets that occupied the room, I climbed a stepladder to view the contents of a wide, flat drawer that slid smoothly out of the cabinet.

As it turned out, there was also in the drawer a beaded belt that was labeled Potawatomi, an item that hadn't been listed in the researcher's computer. I had brought a camera, and I took pictures of both items, then lingered as long as I could with the pipe bowl in my glove-covered hands.

It was a very strange object, not shaped like the plains-style pipestone bowls I was more familiar with. It had been carved from a fossil, and I could see that if a calumet were inserted into the hole drilled

into the inner curve of the bowl and the pipe was smoked, the carved human face would be staring at the smoker. The features on the face were small, but I imagined that I saw great character there.

I wanted to take it with me. But of course, the caretaker was at my shoulder the whole time, one part of an entire network of security designed to make sure such a thing couldn't happen. When she started making impatient noises, I replaced the bowl in the drawer and watched it slide just as smoothly back into its case. I looked around the large room, but didn't ask to look in other drawers or cabinets.

Later, on the phone, my dad asked me what I felt when I was handling the bowl.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"You know...vibes. Last week, when I was up in South Dakota, I stopped at a spring that was known to be an old Lakota camp site. In the noise of the waterfall, I heard a song...faint, but distinctive. That sort of thing. Did you sense anything when you were holding the pipe bowl?"

I hadn't. No vibes, no song. Perhaps it was because of the gloves I was made to wear to protect the artifacts, I thought. Or perhaps it was the distance (of all kinds) that the pipe bowl (and myself) had traveled from Kansas. Well, if I hadn't had any metaphysical stirrings, I had gained some insight on how Indians could feel about the return of Indian museum holdings to Indian country. That pipe bowl should have been staring eerily up at Potawatomi smokers for the last 130 years instead of languishing in a flat metal drawer in a nearly inaccessible climate-controlled federal facility.

Perhaps I did feel something there after all. Maybe contact with that pipe bowl, despite the sanitized layers in between, had quickened some facet of "tribal memory" within me that I didn't know about. I have to believe that home is somehow made through the telling and retelling of stories, and despite my lack of knowledge, that round-faced pipe bowl certainly was not lacking in stories to tell. I consider myself fortunate to have held it, and also to hold within me a desire to return to the home that is still available, and to have not moved so far away—physically, mentally, and spiritually—that a revitalization of the elements of homeness is impossible. That is, I am lucky to still have a home to return to.

The success of the historical governmental strategy to remove the Indian from the Indians amazes (and discourages) me when I really think about it. Though it seems somewhat alarmist (and therefore perhaps politically incorrect) to say so, I believe Indian people have been victims of an "American" lie that first robbed those who told it and which will ultimately defeat any who choose to follow it. Indians were told to stop making of themselves a home, a people. They were told to become "Americans." They were powerfully persuaded to give up their languages, religious activities, children.

For example, Potawatomis traditionally held possessions in common. When the government proposed allotment—individual ownership of the land—only some Indian nations had the foresight (or maybe the previous experience) to want to hold onto tradition and traditionally communal ways of interacting with the land. Prairie Band Potawatomis were among those who resisted. Interested readers should look for the story of the efforts led by Waquaboshkuk against the community-tearing requirements of the Dawes Act. The resistance of these Potawatomis was ultimately futile; that is, they were allotted. But the part of their history that was wisdom—conservatism and traditionalism in the face of this false new story imposed upon them—exerted an important influence upon the people within its age/grasp. Because of that conservatism, Prairie Band Potawatomi tradition lasted a little longer, and survives today.

Nevertheless, the last of that traditional generation are literally dying out. There are some who have grown up thinking in Potawatomi ways, but there are many more who are like me, with only a vestigial tribal memory. That's why the language is so important. Attempting to learn Potawatomi is a painful reactivation and exercise of a withered and forgotten part of myself. The language is so different from the English I take for granted. But I remain faithfully convinced that memory, purpose and livelihood yet exist in there somewhere—and that these energies can be quickened by contact with the words that inhabit the stories that have been told.

Memories of the homeplace on the reservation are among the stories to which I refer. And I don't mind that my own personal memories always seem to get mixed up with stories I've heard told about that place. All kinds of memory overlap, I'm told.

For example, I remember a few things about my *nokmIs*, but the picture is so faint it doesn't translate into words. I only met her a couple of times, growing up. The last time was in 1969, when I was ten years old, enroute from New York state to Florida, before my dad went overseas in the service of the Air Force. Seems like she was quiet, and her features angular. That pretty much describes all of us McKinneys, though. I never met my *mIsho* (grandfather), but I've seen pictures. (One picture of my great-grandfather, after whom both my son and I are named, has been published in a Smithsonian book, The Native Americans.)

I remember visiting the homeplace when I was a boy. *NokmIs* lived there then, and one scene I can recreate is all of us going down to the well and killing chickens for supper. The women chopped the heads off the hens and let them run headless all over the hill until they ran out of life and just keeled over. ...Come to think of it, this could be just another story I'd heard so many times growing up.

I do actually remember walking out from the homeplace once with my dad and a .22 rifle, hunting squirrels. It was when I was in junior high school and we lived just outside of Holton for several months after Dad retired from the service. I remember the feeling of my heart pounding in my chest when a herd of cattle stampeded up to us and stood there staring and breathing, sort of surprised-like, then moved off, and I

remember Dad telling me cattle could be called with the words (not Potawatomi words this time, I'm pretty sure) "So Boss." I remember boldly trying it out a couple of times on the sound of their retreating heels. I remember not being able to learn from him that day how to push

Haircutting at the homeplace; Dad's doing the cutting, with Gladys looking on.

on through the raspberry brambles so that they wouldn't hurt. I remember singeing a squirrel, too, but I don't know if it was one we shot on that trip, or if we even got any. I do remember shooting at a leaf Dad picked out on the far side of a creek bank, and thinking that was an awfully small target to be practicing on.

This personal memory grows larger and more rounded with the stories my dad tells of his own growing up and of similar hunting excursions. He tells, for example, that when he was a boy, cartridges were too expensive to use for target practice. He doesn't state overtly

that he was a good shot anyway; he says that when they went out, they thought about how many squirrels or rabbits they needed, then they took with them that many bullets.

Dad has also shared with my family the many times his family sat on the back porch of the house down on the homeplace, listening to his dad tell stories. One he's told me, and I in turn have told my kids as well as many other kids in grade school assemblies, is about the Potawatomi trickster.

> *Éspln*, the Raccoon, was talking with Possum (I don't know the word) one day. They were both hungry, and as a farmer driving a wagon approached, Raccoon boasted he knew an easy way to get some groceries. Watch this, he said, and he lay down beside the road and pretended to be dead. The farmer, when he came up, saw the raccoon and said aloud to himself, How fortunate! I could use that dead coon to make a coonskin cap! So he stopped, grabbed Raccoon by the tail and tossed him into the back of the wagon. The farmer went on into town and bought his groceries, checked to see that, sure enough, that dead raccoon was still lying right where he'd thrown him. On the way back, however, he didn't notice when, near the spot where Possum still hid, *Éspln* jumped out of the wagon with a bag of groceries in each arm.
>
> Well, Possum, most impressed, decided to use this great trick himself the next day. The farmer, when he approached, did say aloud, Hey! I could use that dead possum to make a possum stew!, and Possum knew the trick was working. But then the farmer had a second thought, remembering the sacks of groceries that disappeared with the mysterious raccoon who rose from the dead. So, to make sure, he picked up the possum by the tail in one hand and took in the other a two-by-four from the wagon bed and, WHAM!, knocked Possum over the head.

Now, that story is different from the stories you normally hear. And I know I tell it different than my dad does, who most certainly missed a little and added a little to his father's telling. But despite these alterations, the story and its lessons haven't changed. It works that way. The fact that the Raccoon tricks not only the farmer in this story but also

his friend almost always raises moral questions about Éspín for the audiences I've told it to, and that rather abrupt ending is not a very satisfying one. But the purposes of Potawatomi legends are unlikely to parallel those of mainstream American culture, and that's okay with me. Perhaps this story, like many Indian traditional stories, simply serves as an explanation for a natural phenomenon—the strange postures of dead animals you see along a country road. On the other hand, perhaps the story conveys something deeper about the Potawatomi mindset, one which mixes the comic and tragic with much less effort and dissonance than the white mind is able to do.

In an attempt to make stories like this one of Raccoon accessible once more to a Potawatomi population that has been scattered and distanced because of the necessities of living life in America, Dad and I have set ourselves upon a process of collecting Potawatomi words and attempting to write them down. Words for the animals, including *éspín*, *méshktenyé* (redtail hawk), *mshiké* (turtle), *nanimwé* (coyote), *nektosha* (horse), *papkonoshkwé* (mouse), *zhgak* (skunk). Words for people's relationships, like *nokmís*, *mísho*, *jíshé* (uncle), *penojé* (baby). Common talk, like *wegnijena* ("What's the matter?") and, one possible response, *coshugégo* ("Nothing."). And of course, *ijé éjebyaygo*, if I can manage to remember it.

We are recording the few Prairie Band Potawatomis left who are first speakers of the language, and along with the audio- and videotapes collected, we hope to take advantage of new technologies to create multimedia teaching materials for use on the computers that have become so ubiquitous in America. We have a world wide web site that has been on the internet for three years, and which includes electronic versions of books written both by and about Potawatomis, and also a Potawatomi-English dictionary that has many of the words linked to sound files, so that a user can not just read, but actually hear how the words are spoken.

My uncle Lucien, who speaks both Potawatomi and Kickapoo, once expressed a strong opinion about such linguistic efforts. On another data-collecting visit to the rez, Dad and I happened to see Lucien in the Trails Cafe in Holton, and we joined him for lunch.

"Oh, yeah," Lucien said, when he heard what we were trying to do. "I've got some pages that you probably want. It's a list of English words side-by-side with Potawatomi words." This was indeed exactly the sort of thing we were looking for, and it was also a description of the kind of word lists we were beginning to produce in our own work.

"But," he went on, "such lists are almost worthless, as far as I'm concerned. That isn't Potawatomi."

Well, that threw me, and my uneasy feeling got even worse when my dad started agreeing with him. However, Lucien proceeded to explain to me that no word-to-word list could adequately translate Potawatomi into English.

"Take *memiki*, for instance," he said. "This list I've got says that the English equivalent of *memiki* is butterfly, and that's basically right. But when my father taught me that word..." And then Lucien went on to describe to us the color (mostly blue) and shape (small, rounded wings) of the butterfly that his father had pointed out to him as a child, and using his hands Lucien depicted the motions of that butterfly's wings as he described its journey from bush to tree branch. "Now that's *memiki*," he concluded, "and that's a whole lot more information than the single word 'butterfly' can convey. Any one-word translation is going to rob *memiki* of a whole lot of meaning."

I listened and realized he was right. How do you explain Potawatomi words like that for tree, *tugwabe'wnIne*, where the last two syllables (*nIne*) is exactly the same word as "man"? How do you translate the term Potawatomis use for "quarter", *ngotye'spen* (literally, "one raccoon"), without being compelled to tell a whole story, within a whole cultural and historical context? What do you do when an English equivalent doesn't even exist, as in the case of the *gwawan*, the open "hearth" structure that is used for both cooking and ceremony at every Potawatomi gathering? The fact that these linguistic difficulties exist does not prevent our continuing the effort, but it does require us to offer a caveat in our published materials that acknowledges the difficulties and dangers of seemingly simple and direct translations.

Our project therefore looks to be a life-long one, since there has never been a full-scale effort to record the Potawatomi language, which

even linguists acknowledge is extremely difficult to represent and to learn. Our collected materials show that those who had reason to write something down in Potawatomi just wrote it the way it sounded to them, and that means different every time; there is no standard orthography, and we had to come up with our own. But the climate is good these days for cultural renewal, and both Dad and I are convinced that language revitalization will have a profound influence on that pursuit, since language and culture are so closely linked. Some older Potawatomis have told me they are glad to see ones like myself interested in returning to their Potawatomi tongue, and my dad and I, along with others, are working to create some good tools so that our young can re-learn this important part of their heritage.

Learning the language is a going home, you see. Like that return several summers ago.

As we looked around the homeplace that day, my dad's remembering brought on more remembering, and he became animated, sharing his memories with me.

He walked me to the remnant of a stone foundation that had been the house he'd grown up in. I tried to imagine the house he described as being so very big to a little boy. The rectangle of stones looked very small to me. A couple of medium-sized trees took up all the room there now inside the rocks. He told me about the many hours he had played under the back porch with the dogs, where they lived. Another childhood playground, a large depression in the earth that might have been a rut of some wagon Trail, existed to the east a ways (or maybe to the south), on a neighbor's land. Since that time, dad has recovered the memory of playing in an old buffalo wallow as well.

Dad showed me a ditch that curved up from the west side of the property to behind the house and back again—that had been the original route of the creek, until he and his dad shoveled a cut straight across to change it. "He never told us directly to do something," Dad instructed. "He didn't teach that way. He just mentioned that there was something that needed doing, left it open ended, and we always jumped at the chance to go along, and help, and learn from it."

We looked for (and didn't find) the stumps of black walnut trees Dad had planted as a boy; he figured someone had come on the place long ago and cut them to sell the wood, which was what he had thought of doing when he first planted the trees.

We went down to the well, near where the first house had stood, and my dad told me about his dad digging it. The cement had a date inscribed, 1938, and a couple of other words that were indistinguishable. I knelt down and looked through the boards; the space beneath felt air conditioned, a pleasant relief on a hot day, and the water was clear and deep. Dad said his dad had dug a long time before hitting a pool of water that sat atop a limestone shelf, and he'd told the family he heard an underground river rushing beneath the stone. If it ever ran dry, my *mIsho* had suggested at the time, the family could dig on through the rock to tap that source. I like to see that as a metaphor for my own activities.

It is stories and memories—my dad's, my own, and ones like these that we got at the same time and which seem to symbolize something bigger than either of us—and not simply physical features—this low spot or that terrace, this tree or that rock—that make of this piece of Kansas land a homeplace. It is the history of the occupancy of Pamnucknucks and McKinneys, and of Potawatomis, the People who adapted, made of a foreign land, a home. It is tribal memory that still lies there among the stones and sage, quiescent, dormant, waiting patiently (Indian-like) to come late (but not too late) to a son or daughter who returns and begins again the process of learning, remembering, rebuilding the homeplace.

On our way out, before crossing back to the world we normally walk in, we came across a small patch of sage, which immediately had great significance for me, being the sacred symbol that it is and where it was found. I picked it all, of course, to take it home. When I was done, Dad asked if I had any tobacco to leave, reminding me right there of a lesson he had once taught me (or was that a piece of tribal memory?), to always leave something when you take something. I became sorry that I had forgotten this lesson and that I didn't have any tobacco, but since then I have always kept some with me, and I know the next time I am there, I will make it right.

CHAPTER TWO
BETWEEN RESEARCHING AND BEING RESEARCHED

In the Fall of 1994, I submitted a grant proposal to the Kansas Humanities Council for one of their small Heritage Grants. My father and I formalized our language project into a nonprofit organization we named BWAKA, which is both a Potawatomi word (meaning "somebody who gets things done") and an English acronym, bringing wisdom and knowledge about. In the Summer of 1995, we conducted data collection activities on the reservation, soliciting texts, and audio tape and videotape artifacts, from elder-speakers there. Because I had just finished recovering from an illness, we spent only two weeks on the reservation instead of the four we had proposed to KHC. Two weeks, just enough time to realize the true scope of the project we had taken on, and to learn that we had given ourselves about enough time to get a small toe in the door of the reservation community, since we were an unknown quantity there. (For example, one tribal member's suspicious demeanor warmed up only when she—about 30 minutes into the interview—retrieved a personal memory of my dad and his family standing around at a long-ago powwow, telling jokes in Potawatomi and laughing hard.)

This essay came to mark a significant change in the way I looked at the research and reporting process. I believe some of the surprise I felt at the time makes its way into the piece, and of course challenging standard academic process came to be the objective of the entire essay. This article is also my first serious attempt at writing for publication in an academic journal. As I wrote, I became aware of two disparate audiences, both important for different reasons; the People back home had changed my concepts of voice and authority in reporting my research. Therefore, by design I limited the article to a single published, theoretical source (feminist Sandra Harding); I also intentionally sought to foreground Potawatomi voices and choices (my own included). This move is supposed to be a "putting into practice" of the premise that drives the essay, that by the time I sat down to write, the academic agenda I had begun with had surrendered at least half its authority, and my research "subjects" had taken for themselves a goodly portion of subjectivity.

The essay thus directly and indirectly challenges the research process that is normally quite neatly wrapped up and presented by the academy to the aspiring academic. Learning to speak the language is necessary for joining any society, and this fact is no less true of joining the academy, but the "standard" modus operandi of

academic research is found here to be inadequate for the Indian researcher, or indeed for anyone conducting research among another culture. Translation is simply too complex for the research reporter to write sanguinely. Multiple methodological processes must be allowed, and multiple spaces for researchers and those researched must be explored and acknowledged as existing in any cross-cultural research situation.

Finally, the heading of the middle section ("Going home to research—Cultural lines of connection and crossing") implies a promise that is not really kept in that section, but which I do get to briefly in the last chapter of this dissertation. The key word is CROSSING, and I think that the word LINES is also pretty important. This was the first place in my work that I began to consider that a ***multiplicity of threads*** *could be (and should be) an important feature of my academic writing and thinking. Heretofore I had figured my inclination to stray from standard procedure was a negative aspect, a problem; I discovered here that it could be a reasonable difference, and even a viable alternative.*

Between Researching and Being Researched

"Don't use this information for personal gain" (Nathan P.[1])

Everything about Nathan's house looked the same as before. The same car was in the carport, the window air conditioner was still running full blast, the curtains were all drawn. Dad and I had given up yesterday after knocking several times and waiting several minutes, but we hadn't known for sure if anybody was indeed home. I had commented that word had probably gotten out that we were going around and that word probably contained an opinion or two about the worth of our project.

But today, Nathan P. answered the back door. He did not invite us in, but stood with us in the shade of his carport that served as defense against the 95° heat. Nathan seemed defensive himself; he stood away from us, on the far side of a wheel barrow, for most of the half hour that we talked. He didn't say too much, but kept insisting we should go see Danny M., a younger man who had been working hard to learn the

[1]For those individuals in my study who did not give permission for me to use their real names, in this text I have substituted pseudonyms, distinguished by an initial for a last name.

language. Nathan seemed not to comprehend (or perhaps he just ignored) that our mission was to collect linguistic data from seniors like himself, elders that grew up speaking Potawatomi.

Nathan relaxed a little when I asked him about something I'd heard, that during World War 2, he and his mother had corresponded in the Potawatomi language. No opportunity arose to ask whether any of those documents still existed, much less could we make photocopies of them and add them to our growing collection of Potawatomi linguistic artifacts (my hope). He and my dad talked then about being in the service, and you could tell this was safer ground; Nathan spoke many more words and even smiled once or twice. But he didn't come out from behind the wheel barrow, and that conversation finally dwindled into the silence that had come to characterize this visit.

We watched Nathan's grandson play with toys scattered about the yard, tying a dump truck to a Big Wheel with a shoestring, then attempting to make it all the way down the hill before it came loose. More waiting, more recommendations to see Danny, more uncomfortable pauses. Then finally Nathan said, Yes, he had made an audio tape of Potawatomi words for his children, and, yes, he supposed we could take it and make a copy. When he went into the house to find the tape, Nathan tripped over the wheelbarrow, and while he was gone, dad and I relapsed into the silence to wonder what ill omen that might be.

In the ten long minutes when Nathan was in the house, with the grandson making an umpteenth trip down the hill, I arrived at a realization of my own about the ups and downs of our process of conducting research on the Potawatomi reservation. What was actually happening was not what I had expected (or been told to expect); it just wasn't that straightforward. And additionally (and this really shocked me), there was no way to go about this activity that would allow us to escape the very strange and contradictory spot it put us in.

We had come to the reservation to collect the essential pieces of a dying language, to somehow preserve it and perhaps even to restore it to use. However, engaged in data collection, "doing research," I wasn't being Potawatomi. I was just what reservation folks feared and had a right to fear: I was an education-person, a *cmokman* (white), an other. A taker.

Two reservation people already had challenged us not to use the information we collected for personal gain. Both Dad and I had agreed, quite solemnly, to keep that charge. But it seemed inescapable to me that I was sitting here on Nathan's carport, breaking social protocols (by showing up and asking for something on the same trip), harvesting my data, leaving nothing of real value with the participants, ...and that the results of my reported research, careful though it may be, would still serve me more than the People, and enjoy its widest circulation among others like me (other researchers), not among them.

This indictment is unfair, of course. We were aware early on that we needed to build into our project a set of checks and balances to prevent what we did from ever resulting in expropriation. We expect the People to benefit from our project, though we anticipate those benefits to be in the long term. Many Potawatomis have shown tremendous support for our work, and that support builds the more they come to understand what we are doing. Yet even these arguments read like rationalizations, in a way. The problem lies in **the roles** quite necessarily constructed by this whole scenario: me, the researcher and them, the researched. Me, the academic representative, and them, the interesting other culture. Me, the collector, and them, the contributors, the "informants."

From the start of our project, the neatness of the dichotomy of Researcher and Research Subject was compromised. I am Potawatomi, by blood, and the other chief proponent in the project is my dad, a fullblood AND a first speaker of the Potawatomi language. I had been assured by the literature and my academic mentors that these variables would lend strength to the project, not weaken it. But it became clear that even the assumptions the project was built upon (the assumptions that the academy makes about the processes underlying any such project!) were challenged as the project itself unfolded.

I write this essay to take a second look at those traditional inquiry assumptions and the roles considered to be standard in the research community, the roles of Researcher and Research Subject. I want to look at one writer in our literature, Sandra Harding, and to tap into her critique of traditional roles and the reflective approach that she raises as an alternative to that tradition. I'll share a description of our research

project, the people we encountered and the process we pursued. And then I want to combine these discussions to raise several issues concerning these traditional research roles, especially in regard to research that crosses cultural boundaries or any other boundaries. It seems to me that research in such situations challenges the claims of straightforwardness made by the traditional approach.

Theoretically, I think many researchers have already made some of the moves I intend to suggest. But in research practice, and especially in reporting practices, I think our discipline is still run with old rules, and I believe change is in order.

The space between Researcher A and Respondent B is not a straight line

Sandra Harding, in the introduction to her book, Feminism and Methodology, distinguishes between method, methodology and epistemology. She resists notions that women may simply be "added" to traditional, male-oriented processes of inquiry and posits several "characteristics that distinguish the most illuminating examples of feminist research" (6). These three features of a truly feminist approach to research include: new empirical and theoretical resources (women's experiences), new purposes of social science (for women), and a new subject matter of inquiry (locating the researcher in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter). The last of these three interests me the most because I see Harding drawing attention to the **roles** of Researcher and Research Subject[2] and suggesting that those roles are perhaps not as stable and stationary as is normally assumed.

Researchers and the readers of their research traditionally accept (too sanguinely, for Harding) the distinct roles of Researcher and Research Subject as established, and fairly unmoving. Harding challenges this attitude by raising a feminist alternative: In the study of women, women are no longer simply the subject matter, studied by others

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[2]Subject is a slippery term. I pose in this essay the second of these two roles as Research Subject because of Harding's phrase, "overt subject matter," and because I ultimately wish to establish characteristics of subjectivity in those that fill this second role; cf. two other important feminist theorist on this "subject", Chris Weedon (78-86) and Susan Hekman (62-104). The reader may be more comfortable with the more familiar dichotomy of Subject/Object; it's worth mentioning that I'm talking roughly about the same thing.

(traditional, nonfeminist, presumably male others), but take over the role of Researcher, and study themselves. Such an act immediately confuses standard assumptions regarding outcomes. Researchers must surrender such traditional "givens" as distance and objectivity; they do not exist. Reflections on a Researcher's own thoughts and impacts on the study are therefore foregrounded instead of ignored or hidden, which effectively turns the Researcher into one of the Research Subjects. In reporting such research, particular care must be given to the selection of evidence to support a Researcher's claims. Care was given in the past, but previously the choosing act of the Researcher was hidden in accepted process. A result of this more overt, disclosing move on the Researcher's part is that additional data is presented to the reader, which Harding believes creates a truer "objectivity," since the decisions regarding inclusion/exclusion are in the readers' hands instead of the author's (Researcher's).

It's important to recognize Harding's (radical) purpose. She openly admits she wants to establish the legitimacy of a "distinctive" feminist approach to inquiry as distinguished from "traditional methodologies" (not methods—Harding sees important differences between the two). She identifies women as an "oppressed" group, along with "other 'underclass' approaches" (8). The research situations Harding is interested in are not "any old 'women's experiences,'" but most often must be "women's experiences in political struggles" (8).

> It may be that it is only through such struggles that one can come to understand oneself and the social world. (8)

Moreover, Harding posits that the research purposes of these struggling and oppressed groups are causally (not casually) related to the origins of the research problems they face. That is to say, any effort to be involved in the practice of research will never be free of an agenda, and that agenda will be the situatedness of the group within its larger society.

> While employers have often commissioned studies of how to make workers happy with less power and pay, workers have rarely been in a position to undertake or commission studies of anything at all, let alone how to make employers happy with less power and profit. Similarly, psychiatrists have endlessly studied what they regard as

> women's peculiar mental and behavioral characteristics, but women have only recently begun to study the bizarre mental and behavioral characteristics of psychiatrists. If we want to understand how our daily experience arrives in the forms it does, it makes sense to examine critically the sources of social power. (8-9)

It's important to know Harding's radical position because in this essay I want to build upon that positioning, paralleling my own cultural group (American Indians) to Harding's feminists. Like Harding, I am interested in foregrounding alternative approaches to the mainstream.

I'm a bit nervous about drawing a characterization of traditional research methodology (it's just too easy a straw man target), but I suppose I shouldn't be because it has become standard practice lately in our literature. Harding herself has the following to say about the "grand theories and the background assumptions of traditional social inquiry" (10):

- Researchers and Research Subjects exist on separate "critical planes," and the Researcher "studies down" (8) upon the Research Subject. (Harding doesn't overtly define study down and study up, but the context has to do with a sort of bootstrapping activity of feminists and "other 'underclass' approaches," so the main point here is the distinction of class.)
- the Researcher appears to the reader of the research report as an "invisible, anonymous voice of authority" (9).
- the Researcher maintains an "objectivist stance" in order to "make the researcher's cultural beliefs and practices invisible" (9).

For the purposes of my discussion, I'd like to recast Harding's description into my own terms. My read of Harding and the situation she describes runs this way: In traditional inquiry,

a) a space exists between Researcher and Research Subject, or to put it in Harding's terms, the Researcher and Research Subject occupy different planes of existence;

b) when researching (from a distance), the Researcher critically looks at the data, or representations of the Research Subject's activities and cultural influences that bear upon them;

c) still distant, the Researcher draws conclusions/generalizations and makes claims about the Research Subject's activities and cultural influences;

d) the Research Subject never does any of this critiquing, only the Researcher;

e) the distance that is maintained between Researcher and Research Subject throughout the process is ultimately called objectivity;

f) in reporting, objectivity dictates that information having to do with the Researcher and their activities (and the cultural influences that bear upon them) be rigorously and tersely explained, then never mentioned again; the object of study is clearly only the Research Subject.

What I find intriguing is that Harding tears down objectivist **space** between Researcher and Research Subject in order to locate both on a single critical plane. She is challenging the solidity of the normally set positions with a concept of movement, shifting Researcher or Research Subject from their comfortable spots, and into the spots of their opposites. Or perhaps Harding is suggesting a third space entirely (which would make for more egalitarian movement). In any case, the identification of separate "planes" for Researcher and Research Subject, and the attempt to move these players in the research game off their "centers" raises some interesting questions:

- what description might serve as coordinates for the precise locations of Researcher and Research Subject (so we can posit ideas about how they stand in relation to each other)? And is preciseness a worthy or even possible goal?
- when the alternative (to traditional) assumptions are applied, who is it that does the moving, Researcher or Research Subject? Or both?
- are there limits to the movement (i.e., can Researcher become fully Research Subject, or vice versa)? When does this movement take place? Is it continual? Does it fluctuate while the research is going on?

- if there are limits or degrees, do these intermediary positions become additional planes of existence (and what are their coordinates, etc., etc.)?

There are more questions, but the concepts of the **spaces** between Researcher and Research Subject and of **movement** between them, especially when such activity contrasts with traditional assumptions, provide a sufficient theoretical base for looking at my own research situation. In the rest of this writing, I will share background for my own experience collecting data on the Potawatomi reservation, relate several narratives (sort of case descriptions) that emerged during that research process, then draw from these examples an application of Harding's challenge to traditional assumptions about research, including problems that might arise if such an approach were implemented.

Going home to research—Cultural lines of connection and crossing

The Potawatomi (who call themselves *nIshnabek*, the People) are not a well-known nation, especially compared to other tribes. Historically, Potawatomis were reduced from a large tribe (occupying at contact most of the southern Great Lakes area, Chicago to Detroit, Green Bay to middle modern day Illinois and Indiana) to approximately seven small bands in the present day, spread from Canada and Wisconsin to Kansas and Oklahoma (and even Mexico). The largest and perhaps most traditional group is the Prairie Band, who live on an eleven-mile-square reservation just north of Topeka, Kansas. The Prairie Band Potawatomi reservation was the site of our data collection.

Potawatomi lack of exposure is linked to an overall lack of academic attention over the last hundred years. While some tribes have been extensively researched, seemingly little effort was expended on Potawatomis, as evidenced by the literature. For example, there is no established or standard orthography for writing the Potawatomi language, no comprehensive dictionary/lexicon published, and only sporadic and individual efforts at writing materials for the purposes of preserving and teaching the language by the Potawatomi people themselves.

The federal policy (assimilation) and attitude toward Indian peoples may be said to have had a profound effect on the People. Potawatomis can

claim historical resistance (cf. the late 1800s opposition to allotment), but in the end, the government basically won. The devastation of Potawatomi culture and language knowledge is severe. Our project's initial list of "speakers" comprised about two dozen people; we gained the actual assistance of nine during the research period. All those are first speakers of Potawatomi (most born within two generations of settlement upon the reservation), but few could now be considered to be fluent—speakers in the sense that they could carry on a conversation rather than are just knowledgeable of words. The main reason for this situation: years of disuse.

The research project arose out of a coalescing of interests between my father and me. He was raised on the Kansas reservation, but left it to make his way in the world (that phrase has special meaning in this context) when he was seventeen. He worked as a jet engine mechanic for the Air Force long enough to retire, and then pastored several white churches in Kansas before relocating to the area in which he now resides (East Kansas). So there is a time and a distance of about thirty years between Jim McKinney and the folks back home.

I was born and raised in that thirty years, and have never lived on the reservation (an important identity delineation for some Indian people). The success of the federal historical policy on Indians and assimilation can be seen directly in my concept of myself in relation to the culture of the People for most of my years growing up: I saw my family as a separate unit, and myself as an individual, not as an Indian. Indianness was not a shame in our household, but it was largely a novelty. I knew how to bead, I did some hoop dancing when I was little, but my pursuit of Indian assistance for college had nothing to do with any perception of or obligation to the People. This changed drastically in graduate school, when I was called upon on various occasions to represent a race I felt I hardly knew. Through study (and a return to my dad with new questions), I came to recognize I was a lot more "Indian" than I had realized; that realization changed my whole outlook and pursuit.

Early on in the process of returning to the culture (a description which I think applies to both my dad and myself), we talked about the

language. Dad was interested in teaching it; I was interested in learning. My involvement in language studies (English department) led to his proposal that I tap those resources for a concerted effort to work on Potawatomi. Dad was interested in recovering what he had lost and in teaching the language to any Potawatomi person interested. My interest in computer pedagogy and multimedia meant that, from the start, the use of modern technology to construct teaching tools would be a part of an effort to renew the language. We began what we saw as a lifetime process of collecting pieces of information—pages, books, tapes, whatever. In 1994, we approached Kansas Humanities Council for a small grant to facilitate the collection of a videotape record of the last real speakers before they were gone. We emphasized our desire to (re)teach rather than just preserve under glass and the potential (promises) of multimedia in regard to the orality of the language. They gave us the grant.

Our plan was to conduct four weeks of data collection in July of 1995; that spring I was ill, and treatments allowed us only two weeks on the reservation. Each day, the Researchers (dad and I, and a student from my university) visited the reservation, ate lunch at the mealsite (the best place to make contacts with seniors), and used the time before and after to visit with speakers. We called the Research Subjects, *nake'ndumwajek*, which in Potawatomi means, "ones who know."

Limits to data collection existed because of our out-of-town/out-of-state situation: although Jim McKinney is well known in the area by his church work and participation in social gatherings, the two weeks of the research period itself was the first real contact we had with the reservation People in regard to data collection. The project had no history, thus no credibility; individuals showed distance and caution. Our research agenda and time situation dictated breaking some typical Potawatomi protocol/social graces (e.g., that a request not be made during first encounter). There were other problems: the concept of collecting a lot of videotape was ill-conceived, at least for this stage of the project, because it was too threatening a gesture from an unknown; and our multiple purposes (the collection of very basic linguistic information AND of video segments that might be used in multimedia teaching modules) were too grand—we over-reached ourselves.

Despite these problems, the result was inspiring to us. We felt we made a real beginning and a lot of ground. Contacts with the People (on and off the reservation) are continuing and expanding as a result of that first exposure. Follow-ups conducted in September and November of 1995 (and since then) are establishing the credibility necessary for future and more complete data collection. These data are an ongoing part of our language learning world wide web site now in existence for almost two years.

The People play an important part in the research process

During the time we were on the reservation, we talked with over a dozen *nake'ndumwajek*. We felt both fortunate to be able to meet with so many in the time we had, and dismayed that as a group they totaled so few. Nine of these seniors allowed us interviews and/or contributed data to our project in the form of videotape or audio tape. While there is room in this essay to elaborate only on one such encounter, a brief description of our involvement with most of the others and an account of a few of the insights they gave us is in order.

Joseph T. refused to participate in our data collection because of his health. But he talked with us for almost an hour, to get to know us and deliver this message as clearly as he could: Do not use these materials that you collect for your own profit.

The same message was repeated by Leonard McKinney, my dad's older brother. Leonard has been teaching Potawatomi, mostly to young people, for many years. He has many pages of handwritten lists of Potawatomi words and sentences, and spent a good deal of his own time over the years sitting at a tape machine in his home and recording these words and phrases. He was more direct in his questioning of our motives and what we intended to do with our collected data than Joseph T. was (probably because that is the job of Potawatomi uncles). Finally, though (I think we passed his "test"), he consented to meeting with us at a future date to be videotaped or at least audio taped. And he gave us three tapes that he had made to copy for our collection.

I mentioned coming back the following week, which Leonard seemed to agree to. But when we returned and I pulled out the video

camera, he actually got angry with me. That means a long period of silence with a certain look off to the side, and then a long lecture about how nephews need to call first on the phone and get on the calendars of older men because who knows when he might be off at some meeting or powwow... I point out this incident both to observe the indirect way Indians (Potawatomis) go about saying no without saying no, and to note my uncle's reluctance to be put on the hot seat (before a taping mechanism) without having had plenty of time to prepare mentally.

Madge C., a lady who is quite well known on the reservation for her ability with the language, also gave us a polite run-around. Madge was mentioned several times when we were making inquiries about who might help. One person informed us she had seen Madge sit with children at the *Penoje Wigwam* (preschool) and read them books that were written in English. But instead of reading the English words, Madge read out loud in Potawatomi, translating as she went. When we met, Madge admitted to doing this, but was unwilling to do it for us.

We approached Madge and also two sisters, Bonnie P. and Violet P., the second day we went to the reservation, mainly because they happened to be at the mealsite that day and just as likely might not be the next, and we didn't want to miss any opportunity. Madge's response to our question whether she'd sit before a video camera and talk Indian was, Perhaps...if I'm here tomorrow, talk to me then. We were back tomorrow, and so was she, because she was helping with a health fair there in the community center. She and Bonnie and Violet sat for our recorder, but they only allowed audio taping, and only for one half hour.

The first few minutes of that half hour were pretty quiet. These are Potawatomi women, and they seemed almost unable to "just talk" about the language, especially when being recorded. We (the Researchers) therefore seized the initiative and took out our lists of basic words by topical category. We had made these lists with the intention of getting all participants to tell us what they thought the Potawatomi word for "x" was, thereby getting lots of cross-confirmation in the process. After a bit, several words on the "outdoors" list seemed to light a spark. The three ladies named several kinds of trees that weren't on our list. At the word "pond," they considered, then because just the right word was elusive,

they began brainstorming, coming up with words for water, running water, creek, river, and the Kaw (Kansas) River.

This section is the best part of the tape. However, conscious of time, when that tangent slowed down a bit, I drew the group's attention back to the word list. This action effectively ended the interview, because after some minutes of discomfort and mostly quiet, Madge mentioned she had to go. It was the end of the half hour. This encounter stuck in my mind as a contrast (of comfort) for the Research Subjects: when we asked them to speak to our list of words, they seemed unwilling (or perhaps unable) to participate; when they got onto something that interested them—and forgot about the camera—then the talk almost flowed, the Potawatomi words popping out. Not the words we had planned for, but that's my point. Our agenda, and my attempt to adhere to it, prevented instead of produced overall success in the session.

Another problematic Researcher move was made by my dad during the session with these ladies. Much of this tape is taken up with Dad talking—filling silence perhaps, but sometimes overriding what I (as mainly a listener) thought could have been useful contribution by one of the three ladies. Attempting to make them more at ease and also to increase our project's credibility, Dad spent time telling them what he thought the correct Potawatomi for "x" was and how he arrived at his conclusions. And the ladies were more than willing to let him talk. But this action directly limited the contributions of our chosen respondents.

The same thing had occurred when we first talked to Tom L. (who we visited twice the second week taping two songs in Potawatomi). During our introductory conversation (we didn't tape until we had permission, which meant coming back for another visit), Dad dominated much of the discussion, overriding and sometimes even interrupting Tom. When this again happened with the three ladies, I mentioned it to Dad in the car afterward. He was surprised by his own actions, but agreed it might have something to do with Potawatomi social protocol. Tom L. is his nephew, so Dad may have been assuming the same role that Leonard had with me. Although the three ladies were our experts during the taping session, Dad was their same age and also a language

nake'ndumwajen. The ladies were quick to surrender control of the conversation and allow Dad to take the lead.

Several conclusions come from these observations, all again pointing to contrast between the assumptions under girding Potawatomi culture and our mainstream one (represented here by myself, the academy, and our research "agenda"). First, it was very difficult for me to even mention this to my father. Though occupying the academic end of the scale, I'm still very conscious of Potawatomi protocol and I had to really work up to telling Dad to "back off." My reasons were sound (not leading the respondents but waiting for their knowledge), and he was perfectly willing to let me be the "boss" (he called me that) in this context. But it wasn't easy to address. Second, Dad was in as peculiar a position as I was, since he directly filled both the role of Researcher and Research Subject (*nake'ndumwajen*) in this project, which must have been a tremendous challenge. His own history of growing up in one culture, pursuing a life-long career completely in another culture, then returning to participation in the first, are factors that contribute to this tension.

Dad did "back off." In the second week, when we videotaped Luetta Jessepe (my dad's sister[3]), my dad sat away from the camera in Lu's house and left the interview to me. (Of course, this positioning could have been due to many other reasons than a conscious move on Dad's part resulting from our earlier discussion—some mysterious counterpart to the Potawatomi Uncle-Nephew relationship, some personality difference or situational difference between Dad and Lu, or simply the logistics of her small living room. Dad says it was the last one.) We took over an hour of videotape of Lu talking about her family and sharing Potawatomi, mostly

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[3]Two evidences of the role my family plays in the Kansas Potawatomi language effort: On a recent list recently compiled by a language grant proposer on the Potawatomi reservation, four of the only twenty-one Prairie Band Potawatomi speakers left are my dad and his siblings. And, when we discussed Tribal Council endorsement of our project in November 1996, one Tribal Council member we talked with was at first quite suspicious, since we were from off-reservation. Over the course of the meeting, she relaxed as she began to see the extent of our efforts so far, but the real clincher was when something that was said jogged an old memory inside her head. She looked up at Dad, kind of surprised, and said, "Oh, I remember you! I remember sitting in a car at a powwow and listening to you and your brothers and sisters, standing in a circle and talking and telling jokes, all in Indian."

in the form of names and their etymologies. I will save a particularly potent discovery, made while taping Lu, for the conclusion of this essay.

I have made time here to go into a little more detail of at least one encounter, the session we had with Maurice M.

"Oh, them McKinneys. What do you want?" (Maurice M.)

We had talked to Maurice a long, long time ago, so at least here we were not forwarding an entirely new idea and spending a lot of time gaining cooperation. Dad and I had met with Maurice a year and half before, in his home, and even took some videotape at that time. He had expressed a willingness then, and since then, to help out. During the first week that we were on the reservation, we'd seen Maurice and his wife at the mealsite at lunch times several days.

Maurice has admitted to us that his credibility is not that high among folks on the reservation. He has been viewed as something of a fence-walker between Indian people and the white society (for example, several times he was an interpreter for the government). But because of his involvement in the mainstream, Maurice is familiar with education, stands in support rather than suspicion of it, and he was quick to comprehend and approve of our purpose in collecting linguistic data. And although some reservation "traditionals" might disparage Maurice for being a bit too much on the white side of the line in the past, no one slights his ability to speak the language. He's had a lot of experience translating; perhaps that takes him slightly away from a "purer" Potawatomi, but on the other hand it means he has been practicing more than most over the years and that he already has made some progress moving ideas from that tongue into English.

We hadn't got around to visiting Maurice until the end of the project's two week duration. The discouragement we'd experienced meeting up with so many brick walls was always mitigated by our sense of, "it doesn't matter, we've still got the 'ace in the hole.'" Meaning, Maurice M. We knew we'd get there, and when we did, we could spend as much of his time as we wanted. That was a good feeling.

But the telling comment was the first words out of his mouth when we walked in the door.

Anticipating great things and wanting to do at least one of these sessions "right," I turned the camera on in the driveway and filmed the meeting from the start. There was a reason: Dad and Maurice always greet each other in Potawatomi, sometimes extensively, and I'm always wishing afterwards I had the tape running. So this time I do.

Maurice comes to the door, and the first thing he says is, "Oh, them McKinneys! What do you want?"

It's joking, of course. But reflection—this meta-analysis—raises other possibilities than strictly polite opening conversation. "What do you want?" Because it has been a year and half since we came by Maurice's house. And the last time, we ran the video camera for an hour or more, taking away with us Maurice's memories and experiences and theories about how the world works (with Maurice, always a lot of the latter). In the meantime, we didn't know that six whole months ago Maurice's wife was in a car accident and still hurts from it. We learn this right away, and my mind automatically registers that this eventuality will probably affect our data collection process. (Why aren't I thinking about her conveniences instead of my own?)

Maurice is more than helpful to us, truly fulfilling our "ace"-expectation. He speaks into our camera for nearly two hours. He tells of his childhood, candidly. He has told this story before, and likes to tell it, of going off to Haskell Institute as a five-year old. Of the strangeness of that new world. Of the many, many Indian boys and girls that attended the school. Of the whole boarding school phenomenon, about which he has had long conversations with others and knows many of their stories. Some of those he shares with us. But mostly his own story.

He is startlingly forthright, telling us about his first day, when his incapacity with the English language and the school administrators' blindness to his needs (or just to his humanity) causes him to mess in his pants. (Although I must, Maurice doesn't use euphemisms to tell of this.) He is embarrassed, of course, but he's also only five, and quite alone and alternativeless. Much later in the day, the other kids (all strangers) push him out of the supper line because he smells. Finally, Maurice remembers with gratitude, a young Indian adolescent approached him after everyone

else is in bed, broke school rules by quietly conversing with him in Potawatomi, and helped him get cleaned up and settled in.

Maurice gives us a second linguistic jewel by telling us and our camera a traditional tale he had heard repeated often during his childhood. The story is about the Potawatomi cultural hero, Wiske', a kind of a trickster figure, and of his tricking of a group of cranes. Wiske' convinces the cranes to dance about with their eyes kept shut, affording him opportunity to eliminate them one by one by wringing their necks. The consequence of looking is that their eyes will turn red, Wiske' keeps reminding the cranes, as they become fewer and fewer in number and more and more alarmed. The last *cijak* (crane) finally surrenders to panic, suffers the penalty, but escapes the fate of his fellows. And that's why, to this day, the crane has red eyes.

The best part of both of these stories is that we have convinced Maurice to tell them in their entirety in Potawatomi.

He's quite agreeable to the idea of telling the stories in Potawatomi, but the task itself seems to balk within him. Maurice is used to "talking Indian," but he's also used to his listeners not knowing or knowing very little of the language. His custom is to speak in the tongue of the People, then to translate what was just said. He begins the above narrative, then stops to ask, do you want me to explain what I just said? I tell him no, that the tape will work for us here; speak just Potawatomi and we'll later translate, perhaps with his help.[4]

Maurice accepts my explanation, goes with it, and even comes to enjoy the session, I think. The key to the success of this methodology is my dad, who is also a first speaker of Potawatomi, though self-admittedly not as good as Maurice. Dad, sitting out of view of the camera, takes the role of attentive listener. Without such, Maurice could not have got into a rhythm, in my opinion. Dad plays his part well, actively responding in Potawatomi, laughing at all the right spots (practically all the Potawatomi stories I've heard are full of laughter, and the Cijak/Wiske' tale is no

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[4]This practice is also a feature of my uncle Leonard's use of Potawatomi, automatically augmenting speech with an English explanation; he doesn't even realize he is speaking with periodic alternation between the two languages.

exception). Maurice, after a difficult start, warms to the process, and we gather "real" Potawatomi conversation.[5]

Where everything comes down: Communities competing for the same "data"

I've already mentioned some of Harding's insights and their relevance to the Potawatomi research situation I've just described. But I'd like to go further and pull some of the threads together. Here are some "conclusions" I would make and a host of issues that quickly follow on their heels.

The spaces of Researcher and Research Subject do exist, but they are not the only spaces, and their instability may become quite evident over the course of a project. I am unable to produce answers to my earlier questions concerning coordinates and degrees of movement, because these roles vary so much and are often in transit. Unlike some social theorists, I do believe statements could be made about the number of spaces that obtain in a certain research project and the character of the relationships between them, though at the end of the exercise, it may not be worth the effort. The main point is that there are far more than two spaces, much less two so confidently and distinctly assigned by tradition as Researcher and Research Subject.

For example, if we were to construct a scale to reflect my research experience, we could place mainstream culture (represented by academic research practice) at one extreme point and American Indian culture (represented by the Potawatomi reservation) at the other. Traditionally, my role as Researcher and, say, Maurice's as Research Subject would be parallel to these poles. But in fact Maurice is not as traditional as some of the other *nake'ndumwajek*, and therefore not as representative of "pure" Potawatomi people (whatever that might be). And I am Potawatomi, therefore would need to be placed on such a scale less at the academy extreme than, say, my major professor. Similarly, my

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[5]Later, Dad shared with me his surprise at just how difficult a time Lorenzo had really had with this process, and with finding some Potawatomi words to use in this discourse. This could be due to0the unfamiliarity of discussing only in Potawatomi or it could point to the fact that much of the ability to really speak Potawatomi (as opposed to just knowing words for this or that) has been lost, due to disuse.

Dad functioned in this project as both Researcher and Research Subject. Continuing with this model, we have not two, but (at least) five spaces represented on our scale.

Harding is concerned primarily with equity between the two spaces traditionally separated (and as a result of practice, valued or devalued). This idea of additional spaces goes beyond what she had in mind, perhaps, but while it raises some interesting possibilities, it also brings with it, problems. Even constructing models with labels upon a scale is a risky business. The relationship between the academy and traditional Potawatomi people could be quite difficult to assess, for example. Rather than spaces forced onto a scale, it might be more useful to use separate scales to describe relationships, or probably some other mechanism entirely. In any case, it is quite possible that these new labels (and inquiries into the relationships that constitute their spaces as well as the spaces between them) may do more work explaining the dynamics of a research situation than the previous terms Researcher and Research Subject.

Movement of roles and between spaces is not only possible, it is probably already going on anyway. The idea of Researcher and Research Subject switching places also raises new and interesting possibilities, especially when seen in the context of a real situation like the one I've described. I think it's clear that our *nake'ndumwajek* successfully broke out of their Research Subject slot, both as individuals asserting their own agendas and effectively overriding the ones I set as Researcher, and also in the more subtle (but powerful) form of Potawatomi cultural protocols and expectations. My Research Subjects weren't even conscious perhaps of their greatest influence, which resulted from my concern with conducting myself and my work in a way they would consider to be respectful. This became an amazing challenge, which I met on some levels and failed on others, but which I think shows that Research Subjects are not simply objects of study, but subjects in another sense (see earlier footnote, and also Dasenbrock for another discussion of this issue).

In other words, Research Subjects are able to have real power and influence upon the research process, privileges traditionally reserved for

(and jealously guarded by) Researchers. Like the ideological classroom may be threatening to some teachers, locating the overt subject matter on the same critical plane as the researcher is likely to be threatening to Researchers. The adjustment this demands can only be good for our discipline.

Conversely, this theoretical insight of moveable spaces also gave me incredible freedom as a Researcher, and especially as the writer of this research report, to view myself as and act the part of a Research Subject. Some of the most important insights, in my opinion, had to do with my own understandings and misunderstandings of and responses to the events that took place. I have to admit they may be important only to me, but this only points up the necessity for more studies along this line which focus on ways of judging what rigor and significance might look like under a nontraditional model.

Yet (to look at the other side of these claims), when Researchers become Research Subjects, and especially when Research Subjects begin taking on Researcher roles, there are certainly problems that must be dealt with as well. For example, how "representative" is an informant who has been "empowered" to join the ranks of the academicians that have entered their community? Even the cognition of the possibility of such a move not only relocates a Research Subject into a new space, but also out of an old space, i.e., the community being studied. Does such movement, which seems to be potentially positive for the Research Subject, have a negative consequence upon the validity of the study? I'm thinking of Maurice, for example, who is socially removed somewhat from the more traditional Potawatomis because of his history of involvement off-reservation.

If the nontraditional research strategy I have discussed is actually to be applied to our disciplinary practice, there are many implications that must be considered, necessitating further inquiries along this line. Terms, such as data, claim, critique, subject, and of course objectivity, must be reevaluated and perhaps even redefined. As Harding suggests, reporting practices—conventions regulating such things as Researcher stance and the protocols for establishing claims and selecting supporting evidence—will need to be revised. I'm very aware, for example, that this

text is a mix (perhaps a curious blend) of nontraditional and traditional moves.[6] And revising texts will also necessitate retraining the expectations of the readers of those texts. More attention will also need to be given to what I have begun increasingly to think of as the research situation.[7] A focus on the situatedness of those involved in a research project forces the acknowledgment that there are variables at work beyond Researcher and Research Subject.

And finally, I believe an approach that attends to dynamics in a research situation is essential if the research objectives take the Researcher across cultural boundaries.[8] When researchers layer in new variables by moving cross-culturally, as we did, even more questions are raised. Considering the context of our project, we could easily ask: What kind of spaces (and boundaries based on notions such as class) do American Indians necessarily face that other cultures (i.e., our mainstream) either do not know about or can conveniently ignore? And, what extra barriers to space movement exist for a researcher who is both professionally located in the academy and historically and socially in the culture being studied?

For this researcher, these questions presented some of the greatest challenges when "doing research" back home, and are the real catalyst for writing this essay. Occupying space and being invested in separate environments at the same time presented me with a quandary, especially when I discovered that both communities were in a sense competing for the same "data." It could be said that the societal and familial context of my situation had a large part in producing the conflicts of interest I speak of, and that such circumstances do not characterize most research situations, even those that cross cultural lines. But I would still not be compelled by the truth of this statement to believe anything other than the following: that most if not all researchers (even Researchers)

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[6]For example, the need to root this academic discourse in disciplinary voices, yet my desire to foreground instead the voices of the reservation subjects, who gathered power momentum over the course of the research.

[7]Ewald and Burnett explore situation, subject/object relationships, and the increased role for the Research Subject in their JAC article; see especially page 43.

[8]Perhaps following the work of those in Anthropology (such as Renato Rosaldo) or in Writing Pedagogy (Giroux, Aronowitz, MacClaren).

regularly face similar tests of loyalty to their spaces and of judgments between forests and trees.

Some things should not be written (Luetta)

I sat beside the camera, listening to my auntie Luetta Jessepe talk, mostly about her children and the difficult times she and they have seen. She was talking of names and people and origins, and she felt it important to share with me a story about the foster children her daughter kept and then adopted, but then who were taken away and returned to their first mother. Recently they had returned (grown up), and that gave Lu happiness, but the memory of the loss moved her to tears.

Watching Lu cry, I found myself helpless before an emotion I can only name as guilt, one even worse than that I had experienced on Nathan's carport. I was uncertain whether I should turn off the camera or not (I did), but mainly I felt bad for not visiting my auntie until (and unless) I needed to "collect" her "data." These were matters that I had not anticipated needing to face when I went onto the reservation to "do research." What room is there in a traditional research report for Researchers to consider their own emotion or guilt, or to agonize over anything "unrelated" to the stipulation of the research question?

It is a dangerous game we play, going out among real people and gathering to us their lives and secrets, and we need to be careful how we do it. I am left with a sense of gratitude for Lu's sharing, but also with a sense of obligation to her that I never had before. There are certain things I learned about the People during those two weeks that I now have realized cannot be shared, and therefore, the account I give of my data will remain incomplete, intentionally. This was a portion of the lesson Lawrence and Leonard were trying to teach. This action will probably be frowned upon by my academic colleagues, but then I am now no longer so simply a representative of that discipline.

Perhaps we are not ready for the intimacy that must result from Researchers and Research Subjects moving into closer proximity. Perhaps that risk is what has kept them so carefully apart up to this point.

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CHAPTER THREE
THE POSTMODERN AND THE TRIBAL: COMPETING DISCOURSES IN AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES

I took a course on Narrative Theory in my department in the Spring of 1995, and at the end of that term, I found it necessary to take an incomplete for the course. (This was a terrible habit of mine; at one time I had a grand total of five black "I"s on my record, and I thought I'd never get out from under that load of bad debt. Word to the wise student: avoid incompletes like the plague.) By the time I got around to doing the work to remove the "I," the course readings were quite distant and the topic for research that I had chosen during the term was stone cold.

However, the upside of waiting so long is that my dissertation research had taken form, and my instructor, Nancy Blyler, kindly allowed me to construct a bibliography based on my new focus and to tailor the final paper for the class to the line of research I wanted to follow for the dissertation. Two birds with one stone (and, not incidentally, more multiple threading). Writing for the Incomplete also brought Narrative Theory into the center of my thinking for the dissertation research, something that hadn't happened yet in my work, and perhaps would have not otherwise occurred.

It was at this time that I began to have a sense that not only were multiple threads available to my writing, but that they seemed to work themselves into my writing and my work on all levels, situating themselves into meaningful relationships and an effective whole. Besides Narrative Theory, I was well into my chosen career of American Indian Studies, and Postmodern theory had provided just the amount of resistance-orientation I needed to decide that bucking the system was a good way to go. (However, it's worth noting that postmodernism had also already lost its appeal in other ways: a resistance ONLY position seems to me pointless and ineffective at accomplishing much of anything productive.)

I quelled the inclination to buck the system long enough to write this essay for the purpose of fulfilling my department's Specialized Exam (part of the Preliminary exam structure) requirements. Writing this essay was an important step in my learning the balancing act of writing for academic publication. In particular, the essay shows the importance of adequately handling the established literature of a discipline (a flaw in the preceding chapter that was pointed out to me by the publisher of the composition journal I submitted it to). This essay is interesting in

that it recommends encouraging (or perhaps just recognizing) multiple voices and stances of academic authors in American Indian studies, and forwards a recognition by Indians of the importance of difference. This is one of the useful ideas offered up by the postmodern critique: Multiple voices (the OTHER) must be acknowledged in cultural writing.

In this essay, I make a major move toward directly discussing Indian identity, and ideology is an important political part of the process of establishing the identities of individuals and groups like those found in American Indian studies. Therefore, the essay is politically charged, though I make an attempt to charitably represent two oppositional Indian studies discourses, and to pose possibilities that would encourage rather than discourage the growth of the American Indian studies discipline.

I mentioned something about these next two essays in the introduction to the dissertation that bears repeating here. This essay is a first working through of a larger set of materials (identity texts in American Indian studies), but although I set out at the start of this essay to conduct a narrative analysis of those texts, what I achieve is really better described as a summary and synthesis of some writings of Vizenor and Cook-Lynn. In its own right, I believe the essay has much to offer AIS, but if you are an academic reader looking for a meatier analysis, be patient; you should find it in chapter four. Meanwhile, this essay provides much information that I believe will be useful to the young and developing discipline of American Indian studies (and it is under consideration for publication by the new online AIS journal, Gohwell); furthermore, the changes that can be observed between these two "drafts" are also useful to my study of the Indian academic's task overall.

The Postmodern and the Tribal: Competing discourses in American Indian Studies

> *If an arrow is well made, it will have tooth marks upon it. That is how you know. The Kiowas made fine arrows and straightened them in their teeth. Then they drew them to the bow to see if they were straight. Once there was a man and his wife. They were alone at night in their tipi. By the light of the fire the man was making arrows. After a while he caught sight of something. There was a small opening in the tipi where two hides were sewn together. Someone was there on the outside, looking in. The man went on with his work, but he said to his wife: "Someone is standing outside. Do not be afraid. Let us talk easily, as of ordinary things." He took up an arrow and straightened it in his teeth; then, as it was right for him to do, he drew it to the bow and took aim, first in this direction and then in that. And all the while he was talking, as if to his wife. But this is how he spoke: "I know that you are there on the outside, for I can feel your eyes upon me. If you are a Kiowa, you will understand what I am saying, and you will speak your name." But there was no answer, and the man went on in the same way, pointing the arrow all around. At last his aim fell upon the place where his enemy stood, and he let go of the string. The arrow went straight to the enemy's heart.*
>
> *N. Scott Momaday* Way to Rainy Mountain *(46)*

What is it about a story that reaches out and grabs us, and holds our attention so closely? I have read the above story many times, have listened to it read aloud, and still, every time, about two-thirds of the way through, my heart starts beating a little faster and I begin to focus in and pay closer attention. And every single time, as I read or hear the last line, I think, that is a great story, or Momaday can really write!

I think one very real power of a narrative is its interpretability, or the potential for an individual to identify with the story and apply the various parts of it to her own life. With a well-told story, one cannot remain distant and objective. Soon questions are raised in a reader/listener's mind, like: What would it be like if I were in that situation? Who do I visualize myself as—the man, his wife, or the enemy looking in from the outside? If I were the main character, would I be able to maintain such composure, and act with such wisdom and courage? What would it be like to know and use another language in the way this man does, as a secret and coded—and an extremely effective—tool? Some readers may go so far as to attempt to interpret even the smallest details of such a text: What might the arrow signify for me in my own situation? Or even the teeth marks? What boundaries of inside and outside, signified by the tipi walls, exist in my life? What ironies do I face, spoken in stark

ordinariness as in this main character's words, in the context of a life and death situation? And, perhaps most chilling: who is my enemy?

These questions come down to one question, what **meaning** does the story I listen to have in my own life? Some theorists argue that there is no meaning outside of this "reader" response. I do not intend to engage in that debate here, but suffice it to say that in interpreting and applying what we hear, stories can have huge impact and influence on our daily lives. They can—and do—shape who we are.

This essay attempts to explore the process of shaping and constructing of identity, in particular, of American Indian identity. To narrow the focus of that huge topic somewhat, I have chosen to look at the environment of American Indian Studies programs in institutions of higher learning, partially because it is my belief that Indian studies is in the middle of a growth period—a moment of heightened or accelerated identity construction. I have also narrowed the focus of the study by looking into the **stories** of the American Indian studies discipline. In particular, this essay is a narrative analysis of several academic texts written by leading authors in the field, shapers of the discipline. I hope, by looking at these texts in this manner, to engage in a profitable discussion of the development of Indian identity in the American Indian studies discipline.

In the first chapter of his book, Tribal Secrets, Robert Allen Warrior tells a story of an over-two-centuries-long literary tradition of American Indian studies. He believes this body of literature can now be drawn upon both for a more powerful disciplinary stance in the academy and as a resource for critical reflection of ourselves, as we work to establish a clearer concept of our identity as a discipline. Warrior tells of four stages in this literary tradition, alternating periods of unity and disunity between Indian writers[9]. The fourth stage, in which we now find

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[9] Warrior chooses to draw a circle that includes only Indian authors, rather than all contributors to writings ABOUT Indian people. For his defense of this choice, see his introduction, especially pages xvi and xxi. I think the move is a good one, and I think it also points to the necessity of the questions I will raise in this essay, since decisions of whose texts to include or exclude in/from this canon will be predicated on the rationale with which one determines "Who is Indian?".

ourselves, is disunified at least in part because of the sheer numbers of new Indian writers who are now taking part in producing the literature.

I believe that Warrior, by the organization of his account of the American Indian studies literary tradition (his plot line, you could say), argues that it is now time for the next alternation, for a period of cohesion in the discipline. He states that our current stage is one in which there seems to be intense "desire to find a way to unify the discourse" (43). A goal of Warrior's book is to promote a new disciplinary critique. However, it is interesting to me that Warrior, while arguing for a more critical disciplinary discourse, one featuring "more vigor and energy than in the past" (xvi), at the same time requests **an avoidance of identity politics** in that discourse (xxi). His worry is that "questions of identity and authenticity" have so far have served primarily to "obscur[e] more pressing concerns" (xix). I agree with Warrior that it is time for a new and more open critique of Indian studies, by Indian intellectuals and academics. But I disagree that the issue of identity should be avoided; in my opinion, it is the heart of the discussion. Warrior says this debate has so far done more to "reduce, constrain, and contain American Indian literature and thought...than engage the myriad critical issues crucial to an Indian future" (xix). He's right. But I believe that it is the powerful identity narratives themselves that are acting directly in the constraining and containing activity to which Warrior refers.

This essay attempts to look at two narratives of Indian identity in American Indian studies, two discourses which seem to stand in competition with each other. I try to discuss each fairly, and avoid the essentialism that Warrior fears, in the hope of promoting an articulation between territorial lines that have been drawn in the discipline and to provide useful theory and method for a more open discussion of these matters. Devon Mihesuah, who edited a special issue of the American Indian Quarterly on "Writing About (Writing About) American Indians" in 1996, said, "Despite the controversy, hurt feelings, and possible retaliation these topics are likely to engender, *we must talk about them*" (91). We need to grow the discipline, and it will be dialogue that does it.

The following essay begins with a section that explains why and how I chose to conduct a narrative analysis of American Indian Studies.

That section is followed by a discussion of the identity narratives told by each of two major emphases in the discipline, the Postmodern and Tribal camps. The primary texts for my analyses in these sections are academic writings by two leading authors of these groups, Gerald Vizenor and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn. The conclusion of this essay attempts to pull the various threads revealed in the analyses into a fabric or story of my own, one which I hope will assist in producing the disciplinary unity that Warrior believes should happen, and one which offers some new ways to think about issues of identity and engage in critical disciplinary discourse at the same time. The reader will determine in the end whether I succeed in this task.

Narrative Analysis and Indian Identity

> *Rather than being merely ornamental, a dab of local color, protagonists' narratives about their own conduct merit serious attention as forms of social analysis.*
>
> *(Renato Rosaldo , Culture and Truth 143)*

> *Self is a text about how one is situated with respect to others and toward the world.*
>
> *(Jerome Bruner Actual Minds, Possible Worlds 130)*

Okay, you win; you take the prize,
but what you said just now—it isn't so funny....
Take it back.
It's already turned loose.
It's already coming.
It can't be called back.

(Leslie Marmon Silko, "Long Time Ago" in Storyteller 137)

Narrative Theory

Narratives are powerful, and they deserve more attention than they have been given in the social sciences. In Indian country, arguments for the importance of storytelling are not needed. Come the right season, put on a pot of coffee, sit in a circle or across the table, and the stories are going to roll out. A question addressed to an Indian elder, no matter how directly presented, will more likely than not be answered by a story, in which the answer/lesson is most certainly contained, but must be extracted by the listener.

N. Scott Momaday, at the first convocation of American Indian Scholars at Princeton University in March 1970, in a discussion which

took place after and in response to his now famous speech, "The Man Made of Words," said the following about the power of language and stories.

> "Man has consummate being in language, and there only. The state of human *being* is an idea, an idea which man has of himself. Only when he is embodied in an idea, and the idea is realized in language, can man take possession of himself." (56)

Momaday also wrote, in Way To Rainy Mountain, "A word has power in and of itself. It comes from nothing into sound and meaning; it gives origin to all things. By means of words can a man deal with the world on equal terms" (33). The third epigraph above also illustrates the belief of another excellent Indian writer, Leslie Marmon Silko, regarding the power that is inherent in act of narrativizing or storytelling.

This knowledge of the value and power of narrative is not solely an Indian phenomenon. Storytelling also goes on, of course, every day in mainstream America—but perhaps without much attention or credence. Particularly in serious academic circles, where rigor is the key, narrative has been historically and methodologically marginalized. Only recently has serious attention been given to the study of narrative in the social sciences.

One of those recent theorists, psychologist Jerome Bruner, connects narrative to the process of identity construction. In "Life as Narrative," Bruner expresses the belief that story and action are inextricably bound up with each other: "Narrative imitates life, life imitates narrative" (13). Later in that essay, Bruner very specifically shows how stories not only are accounts or reflections of life occurrences, but also turn in time to become a causal and creative force in an individual's decision-making practice.

> The ways of telling and the ways of conceptualizing that go with them become so habitual that they finally become recipes for structuring experience itself, for laying down routes into memory, for not only guiding the life narrative up to the present but directing it into the future. (31)

Anthropologist Renato Rosaldo, in Culture and Truth, a ground-breaking volume on social science research and the academic reporting

practice, expresses a similar view during his discussion of the expected vs. the unexpected in storytelling. In a chapter titled "Narrative Analysis," in which he argues for a more prestigious place for the narrative critique in the social sciences, Rosaldo makes an important point about audience, or the listeners to a told story. Rosaldo shares a description of the hunting process of the !Kung San culture of southern Africa, as written by Richard Borshay Lee. Lee's description, in keeping with "the classic norms" of anthropological reporting, is a **composite** account, created from "repeated observations and multiple indigenous reports," resulting in a generalized description of the !Kung San hunt (129). But Rosaldo argues, from his own experience with the Ilongot of the Philippines, that the (presumably) primary audience of such a story telling, the hunters themselves, find little use in this sort of composite account.

> Ilongot storytellers and their interlocutors no more need repeat what "everybody" already knows about hunting than a group of avid sports fans need to bore each other by reciting the basic rules of the game....composite accounts usually exclude the very qualities that huntsmen most value. (129)

What is most valued, Rosaldo says, is not stories of the expected and mundane, but just the opposite, accounts which expound on "the huntsmen's capacity to respond to the unexpected" (129). Ilongot hunters tell each other stories of hunting prowess, and then they go "seek out experiences that can be told as stories" (129). Rosaldo's conviction that "**stories significantly shape human conduct**" is a primary argument for his claim that narrative thus "cannot be ignored by social analysis" (130, my boldface).

In this essay I will draw on these essays and other literature that links narrative to identity and explores the rhetorical power of stories[10],

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[10] There are many interesting studies in my field of communication studies that address the power of narrative, including Marsha Witten "Narrative and the Culture of Obedience at the Workplace" in Mumby, Dennis K., ed. Narrative and Social Control: Critical Perspectives Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1993, 97-118; Laurel Richardson "Narrative and Sociology" in John Van Maanen, ed. Representation in Ethnography London: Sage, 1995. 198-221; and Dennis Mumby's "Introduction" in Narrative and Social Control. See also Hayden White's discussion of plot's effect on the historiographic process in "The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory" in Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation 1987, 26-57 (esp. 50-53) and his discussion of

to find a possible intersection between an Indian and an academic perception of the storytelling or narrative act. This is the first significant contribution of this study. The study of Indian storytelling can benefit from insights into the dynamics of narrative as explored in academic research and theorizing (and there is precedent, as well, for Indian accommodation of outside ideas and technology, used to further Indian thought and activity). As well, academic research and thought can learn something from a group of people who have been "doing" stories much longer than they have.

Narratives are powerful in part because they are persuasive, and even generative as well. My focus in this essay is on how Indian identity is constructed, and I am firmly convinced that there is a direct (a causal, rather than casual) relationship between any Indian's cultural self-concept, and the stories they have heard and tell about being Indian. My approach is that narratives can provide an excellent site for getting at the characteristics of an identity construction, be it of an individual or of a group/culture. My premise is that told (and retold) stories, since they play a constructive role in identity formation, can also be used as basic indicators of identity. Identity comes from an integration of factors that will be manifested in a group's stories, and the stories can provide pieces (artifacts?) that allow a meta-narrative of the process of the identity construction to be written. For the purposes of this study, the "group" will be an academic discipline, but I believe the same approach may work for an individual tribe or for subcultures in our society, such as urban Indians or Indian students. This is the second significance of my essay, the attempt to introduce a methodology that will assist in a helpful and open discussion of Indian identity, especially that of the Indian academic and in the context of American Indian studies.

Issues of Indian Identity

The question, "Who is Indian?," embodies an issue of tremendous importance to contemporary Indian life. Since contact between Indians and Europeans occurred, "Who is Indian?" has been a factor that has

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how narrative provides a sense of reality in "Narrativity in the Representation of Reality" (23).

shaped American history. More recently, the question has taken on even more significance as the emotional tide of the American outlook has changed. In practically a single generation, centuries of the federal and popular view, previously occupied with "killing" the Indian and melting native identity into a singular American pot, has now given way to a nearly universal attraction to all things Indian. A Potawatomi elder I worked with on a language project said it this way: "I wish the government would make up its mind. As a child, they beat the language out of me, and now they're paying me to teach it."

This new-found favor has increased opportunities for Indian writers. The evidence is found in the increased publication of books and journal articles authored by Indian people, in both academic and popular presses. Indian academics are just beginning to enjoy a voice long denied them in the academy. At my own school, the administration is providing increasingly large amounts of money for multiple hires of Indian (and non-Indian) faculty to direct and teach an American Indian Studies Program that has been around for twenty-five years, but which never managed to take off. With an Indian faculty in place, that should change. On the national scene, new Indian studies journals are being created, and national professional organizations for Indian academics are growing. Young Indian undergraduate and graduate students are looking toward this new momentum of Indian intellectualism, and see opportunities for themselves to play a part in it all. Now, Indian people are a still a long way from an effective and viable role in the overall university setting, but things look at least as good or better than they ever have.

But at what cost? Indian academics continually ask this question, because the interest in placing Indians into universities has produced an equal opportunity for Indian fraud in the academy. The possession of a PhD does not seem to significantly mitigate the expropriative practice of those so inclined, and it pains Indians to see Indian opportunities fall into the possession of non-Indians. In the discipline of American Indian studies, which has, like my own school's Indian program, been around for some time, but which is now experiencing a surge in its construction and expansion, the question of "Who is (really) Indian?" is therefore central in the minds of many.

This study addresses the way that question is answered by two influential groups in the American Indian studies discipline, by reading the stories of Indian identity that those groups tell. Robert Warrior believes the discipline is now mature enough for a new and reflexive critique, and this essay attempts to take up that challenge (xvi). New in the discipline, and an off-reservation mixed-blood, but one with an acute awareness of the historical account and the tribe's right to privilege its cultural information, I have struggled with issues of Indian identity[11]. Not my own identity so much as where the lines are to be drawn as we seek to build the American Indian studies discipline in the academy. It is my conviction that it will be an increase in the numbers of Indians with PhDs and professorships that will garner us finally a decent seat at the table. But such progress will be harmed by the appointment to those positions individuals that claim to be Indian, but who really are not. "Who is an Indian academic?" is therefore a very important American Indian studies issue.

A Narrative Analysis Methodology

To explore the dynamics that are at work in this debate, I set out to look at American Indian studies narratives that draw the parameters for an Indian identity in the discipline. Like Warrior, I focused on Indian authors, not on the creative writings which comprise the bulk of Indian (and American Indian studies) literature, but on the scholarly articles and books that directly discuss the American Indian studies discipline and often address issues of identity construction—both the development of a group identity for the discipline as a whole and also the development of the individual identities of Indian academics who comprise and shape the discipline. I was interested in the possibility of a single strong narrative

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[11] Perhaps the clearest site of this acuity is my own Potawatomi language project, which shares information about the language over the world wide web, in order to provide cultural information with the majority of the Prairie Band Potawatomi enrollment who are dispersed (about 1/8 of the population live geographically on or near the Kansas reservation community). But there are local PBP members who protest the use of the web, convinced that "pretty soon, anybody will know Potawatomi, and then where will we be?" There is no room here to describe all the dynamics nor the ways we go about addressing this dilemma, but I mention the case to emphasize that members of our language project honor the truths of this complaint, and the parts of language that we do (and do not) share over the web reflects the powerful influence of the tribal voice on our situation.

thread that ran through the literature, emerging not as the only story told, but as the strongest, most convincing, and therefore most influential story. My readings in narrative theory indicated to me that this would be the case, as it is in many organizations[12]. I did **not** find a single driving identity narrative in Indian studies, but I did find two influential camps, each with compelling stories of Indian identity. And, interestingly enough, the stories of Indianness told by the two camps, while competing with each other in many ways, also have several features in common.

To conduct a narrative inquiry, I turned to communication studies, where a narrative critique is often built upon a dramatistic model. Kenneth Burke is one of the originators of this concept, and he provides a neat set of variables for the study of a drama or narrative in his famous "pentad": act, agent, agency, scene, and purpose[13]. In a more direct exposition of narrative criticism, Sonja Foss also lists identifying features in a narrative: setting, characters, narrator, events, temporal relations, causal relations, audience, and theme (402-405). With eight elements instead of five, Foss' model perhaps provides greater opportunity for detail than Burke's does; it certainly illuminates differences in our contemporary conception of what comprises a narrative. But both of these models provided too many variables for my analysis, so I chose to concentrate on three narrative elements that were a sort of hybrid of both accounts: **agent**, **setting**, and **purpose**. To put it another way, I decided to look in the identity narratives of the postmodern and tribal camps for evidence of the setting (American Indian Studies) and the activities of agents (Indian academics) within that setting, leading to an understanding of each group's purpose or motivation in telling the story in the manner they choose, as well as a sense of the task each camp would set for the Indian agent to accomplish.

My process consisted of first reading broadly in the American Indian studies literature, looking less for references to narrative than for discussions of the Indian identity and texts where stories were used to make arguments. I also looked for patterns, places where told narratives

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[12] See Dennis K. Mumby's important text, Narrative and Social Control (2).

[13] Most completely addressed in Grammar of Motives, but in many other texts as well, including "Terministic Screens" (44-62). In the latter essay, Burke extends his pentad more generally to describe any human dramatic activity.

were replicated, which for me would be possible indications of groups of writers sharing a single perspective. This latter strategy became more a search for key words and phrases, short but powerful narrative cues[14] that carried a volume of meaning in very little space. This list of key words came in quite handy in the later analysis of texts. Gradually, patterns did emerge from the texts I was reading, and I was able to identify two competing views or positions which I have labeled here as the postmodern and the tribal camps. I focused my study at this point by choosing two authors that I thought exemplified these two groups, and then by choosing several writings of the two authors to serve as the main texts for my analysis. I used my narrative criticism features of agency, setting, and purpose to surface several essential keywords (e.g.. colonialism, sovereignty, survivance), and then reread for occurrences of those words and phrases. The compilation of these passages allowed me to construct a more unified account of the story being told by each side, and since there were two and they seemed to stand in competition with each other, the resulting comparison and contrast turned out to be an unexpected benefit of the study.

The key phrases and features relating to the narrative feature of **setting** in each group's story of Indian identity were somewhat easier to ascertain than those pertaining to agency. However, as we will see, each camp's perception of how they stand in relationship to others—most notably, the mainstream society—does play a significant role in how they construct Indian identity. **Purpose**, on the other hand, turns out to be quite difficult to pin down, and while I am very interested in the intentions of these authors and their camps, the limited amount of data produced by this approach does not reach any conclusions, only raises questions. But the questions are worth asking, and I hope the unusual direction that I have taken will be helpful to further narrative analyses of Indian identity stories down the road.

The most fruitful result of my study, I think, is the resulting description of **agency** that I believe each camp makes. These essential

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[14] Ernest Bormann writes about cryptic (one or a few words) symbolic cues or triggers that can set off an elaborate shared fantasy theme of a group that has "charged their emotional and memory banks with meanings and emotions" (6).

features of Indian identity lead to a beginning assessment of each camp's opinion about who belongs or doesn't belong in the category of "Indian" academic. Narrativized Indian agents[15]—which would include both the writers of the texts I studied and the Indian individuals they write about and to—turn out to be characters in a disciplinary drama, going about acting and conversing with each other. They are also narrators and writers of their own and others' stories. In this context, Indian academics establish and construct their own place and identity within the academy, and also participate in the larger American Indian studies disciplinary construction.

In the end, it is this aspect of agency in the identity construction process that I have become most interested in. In particular, issues of subjectivity hold my attention: Indian academic, who writes your story and scripts your daily lines? Do you participate in this construction, or have you relinquished the responsibility to someone else? I believe both postmoderns and tribals have something to gain from their story being taken up and told and retold by other Indian academics. I am not condemning such ideological activity, merely acknowledging its existence, and offering one possible method for each individual agent to use to assess what is at stake and to choose for themselves the part they will play.

The Postmodern Voice in American Indian Studies

> *The arrowmakers and wordmakers survive in the word wars with sacred memories.* *(Gerald Vizenor, Wordarrows viii)*
>
> *This portrait is not an Indian.* *(Gerald Vizenor, Manifest Manners)*

Gerald Vizenor has been contributing texts to the body of American Indian literature for a long time. His first works were published in the early 1960s. He is a prolific writer[16], and one who writes with great variety, crossing the boundaries between genres and other modes of discourse. Kimberly M. Blaeser notes that Vizenor has "given his voice to poetry, journalism, short and long fiction, 'reexpressions' of traditional

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[15] In a characteristically postmodern fashion, this play is fully intended.

[16] The *selective* bibliography in the back of the recently published Shadow Distance: A Gerald Vizenor Reader lists 25 books and 57 items under "essays and other publications" (337).

works, genealogy, autobiography, editorials, essays, literary journalism, screenplays, and to what he calls 'narrative histories'" (10). But despite the size of the Vizenor canon, Vizenor's texts sometimes—even often—receive a lukewarm reception from other Indian writers. Or even outright hostility[17]. Vizenor is controversial, to be sure, and it is this position of controversy—the questions that Indian people would (and do) raise about the man and his writings—combined with the revolutionary ideas that he expresses in his voluminous contribution to Indian literature, that moved Vizenor to one of the central positions of my study.

A large part of the difficulty Indian readers have with Vizenor is his postmodernism, and often his texts serve not only to inform the problem but also to exacerbate it. Vizenor is widely recognized as the leading postmodern voice in Indian writings, but there seems to be an almost as widespread confusion about just what exactly is meant by the term, postmodern, and how it might be useful to the discipline. Vizenor seems undaunted by his critics and he continues both to exemplify a postmodern approach in his writing style and to make overt use of the term in his texts, which is some help. For example, the titles of two of his more recent texts are Narrative Chance: Postmodern Discourse on Native American Literatures and Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance.

In Narrative Chance, a collection of essays by Vizenor and other postmodern writers, Vizenor devotes the first half of his introduction to definitions, where he utilizes Brian Hale's explanation of the term:

> Postmodernism is not post modern, whatever that might mean, but postmodern*ism*; it does not come *after the present* (a solecism), but after the *modernist movement*....Postmodernism follows *from* modernism." (4)

It may be useful to view postmodernism, therefore, as reactionary, an activity that comes after and in protest to the unacceptable situation of

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[17] In the summer of 1997, another high-profile Indian author, Sherman Alexie led an attack on Vizenor in an internet listserv discussion on native literature that many Indian and non-Indian academics participate in. More recently, at the 1998 Association of American Indian and Alaskan Native Professors annual conference, several times when I shared brief descriptions of my current study, I heard negative comments about Vizenor and postmodernism. And I also heard the tribal arguments of Cook Lynn expressed in a number of sessions and open meetings. Interesting!

modernism. For Vizenor, the unacceptable modernist situation is the grand narrative of the Indian that the American culture has written and so successfully propagated over the years. He calls that conception, the **invented Indian**. If, as Hale argues, a "postmodern" is an individual who follows and responds to the modernism movement, then Vizenor's **postindian** (as found in the second title I named above) will be the individual who comes after and in protest to established and popularized conceptions of "Indian."

Vizenor sees great opportunity in postmodernism. He calls it "a clever condition: an invitation to narrative chance in a new language game and an overture to amend the formal interpretations and transubstantiation of tribal literatures" (4). Pursuing this opportunity in Narrative Chance, Vizenor turns to Jean-Francois Lyotard, one of the first postmodern theorists to emphasize the role narratives play in the construction of identity. Lyotard attacked the "grand narrative," powerfully told stories that he viewed as responsible for political and cultural pressure and containment. As an Indian, Vizenor is familiar with a context of cultural containment, and is therefore interested in the concept of **transformation** offered by Lyotard. He believes that "postmodern writing overturns" established inventions of Indian identity, providing opportunities for writers (and readers) to engage in language games or "pleasurable misreadings" of established Indian literatures (5). Vizenor hopes, through postmodern writing, to "liberate tribal narratives" which are filled with a containing and culturally enslaving story (5).

Kimberly M. Blaeser has written an excellent volume on Vizenor's work, Gerald Vizenor: Writing in the Oral Tradition. In a discussion of Vizenor's theoretical connection to postmodernism—in particular, reader-response criticism—Blaeser lists several characteristics of both modernism and the postmodern intent that contrasts it. She cites Ihab Hassan, who is of the reader-response school, to form this definition of postmodernism. Hassan says that where Modernism emphasizes a *closed form*, *purpose*, *design*, *distance*, *presence*, an *origin* or *cause*, and *determinacy*, Postmodernism stresses instead an *open or disjunctive form*, *play* instead of purpose, *chance* in lieu of design, *participation*, *absence*, *difference*, and *indeterminacy* (36).

Here is an example of how one of these postmodern features takes shape in Vizenor's texts: Blaeser writes at length about Vizenor's connection to reader response theory and his desire to engage his reader in a *participation* of textual construction that goes beyond a passive reading experience. The historical and cultural "literature of dominance" (which I will discuss further in the next sub-section), written almost exclusively by non-Indians, has established for itself a semblance of *distance*, *presence*, *cause*, and *determinacy* that Vizenor would like to overturn. He accomplishes this transformation by using postmodern strategies to **open up** his own writings, overtly tearing down the closed and final "objectivities" of the literature of dominance, and covertly inviting (even forcing) the reader to engage his texts in new and unusual ways. Blaeser elaborates on the participative nature of Vizenor's writing this way:

> Vizenor immerses his own text in a network of literary, social, and critical subtexts that essentially encourage and enact a multilevel discourse, and he employs various recognizable rhetorical strategies to create an "open text." Through multiple forms of ambiguity and indeterminacy, for example, Vizenor strives to compensate for the inadequacies of written language by involving the active imagination of the reader in discovering the unwritten elements of his work. (13)

Another Vizenor favorite among Hassan's features of postmodernism is chance or play, which he would probably see as the same thing, or at least two sides of a single coin. Chance is prominent in the title of his collection of postmodern essays, and in Dead Voices, a novel, Vizenor says, "Nothing comes around in chance when the best moments are lost to manners and the clock" (16). He connects the game-playing nature of postmodernism to the Indian traditional figure of the trickster; for Vizenor, "the trickster is postmodern" (Narrative Chance 9). Via trickster discourse, a writer may transform common and stereotypical conceptions of the Indian, and also cheerfully invite participation and invoke a sense of an individual reader's larger situation. For Vizenor, "the trickster is a communal sign, never isolation; a concordance of narrative voices," and trickster discourse allows the

trickster narrator, story characters, and the audience as well to "**share** the narrative event" (13, my emphasis).

In summary, play, chance, openness and participation are postmodern facets that Vizenor prizes. His writings both teach this interest and represent it; they are postmodern in content and in form. All the while that Vizenor writes about the trickster, he is also acting as one, and it is precisely because Vizenor goes to such great pains to play with and in his texts, to open them (and the very discursive act) up to new and interesting possibilities, and to engage his reader in a participatory and creative role, that his texts are so challenging. We, as readers, are just not used to such engagements, and therefore we may resist the experience. It is a struggle to read Vizenor, when often the rules of writing (even the ones he himself establishes) are forgotten or purposefully thrown out the window. Blaeser describes what is happening with Vizenor texts in this way:

> His stories seldom progress in smooth plot lines. His characters often speak in puzzling and convoluted ways. Very little is resolved in the works of Vizenor. He refuses to grant his reader certain satisfactions in the text because they would close off other possibilities he deems more essential: the possibilities of reader participation and discovery, the possibility that the story has life beyond the page, the possibility of a new kind of "survivance." (13)

Blaeser acknowledges that this aspect of Vizenor's style "poses [problems] for uninitiated readers" (13). She feels that by writing on so many different levels in a desire to dis-cover and open new meanings in a text, that by challenging the reader so persistently, Vizenor sometimes "runs the risk of asking too much. He essentially pulls the text out from under complacent readers" (13). An emphasis should be placed here on reader complacency, for which Vizenor has little patience. Still, it is this tendency to "ask too much" that makes many of his texts sometimes difficult to understand. Nevertheless, the postmodern tack that Vizenor offers has its strengths (though this view of his work seems to belong to non-Indian academic writers more than Indian ones, at least for the

present[18]). One of those strengths is Vizenor's conception of the setting in which his postmodern Indian (the postindian) conducts her work.

Postmodern Setting—Manifest Manners and the Literature of Dominance

Vizenor avoids setting down clear definitions for manifest manners or the literature of dominance, two terms that frequent his book, Manifest Manners. This move leaves room for his reader to interpret them as they see fit; one of the delights of Vizenor's texts is the holophrastic character of his terms. However, the contexts in which he uses the terms reveal much about the possibilities Vizenor has in mind for the meaning of these two concepts.

For example, Vizenor opens Manifest Manners in this way:

> President Thomas Jefferson envisioned a water course to the western coast of the nation a decade before he proposed the expedition that would become the most notable literature of tribal survivance.

And then he writes of this same event on the following page:

> The Lewis and Clark expedition was one of the first transcontinental encounters with diverse tribal cultures; the encounters were inevitable in the new nation, but the successive encroachments on the natural presence of the tribes were vicious and barbarous. The cruelties of national and colonial authorities were widespread; the grievous outcome of avarice, perverse determinism, and **the destinies that would become manifest manners in the literature of dominance**. (2, my emphasis)

This reference to the Lewis and Clark expedition, one of the fondest memories in the mainstream conception of the history of the

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[18] A survey of the disciplinary literature shows essays on postmodernism and responses to Vizenor's theory written mostly by non-Indian authors or authors that do not identify themselves as Indian. A few examples of journal articles in the last five years: Dirlik, Arif "The Past as Legacy and Project: Postcolonial Criticism in the Perspective of Indigenous Historicism" American Indian Culture and Research Journal, 20.2 (1996): 1-31; Laga, Barry E. "Gerald Vizenor and his Heirs of Columbus: A Postmodern Quest for More Discourse" American Indian Quarterly, 18.1 (Winter 1994): 71-86; McNeil, Elizabeth "'The Game Never Ends': Gerald Vizenor's Gamble with Language and Structure in Summer in the Spring" American Indian Culture and Research Journal, 19.2 (1995): 85-109; Tongson-McCall, Karen "The Nether World of Neither World: Hybridization in the Literature of Wendy Rose" American Indian Culture and Research Journal, 20.4 (1996): 1-40.

United States, serves to frame Vizenor's view of an attitude that prevails in (and upon) America. Vizenor focuses on a president, one of the "great fathers" that represented the federal government of the United States in encounters with the independent nations that were already residing in North America. Vizenor does not choose another president, a more likely "villain" such as Andrew Jackson, who (even some mainstream Americans realize) later acted in an unscrupulous and inhuman manner by instigating the removal of the Cherokee people and setting them upon the Trail of Tears. For Jackson might be called an anomaly, not a "true" American, at least not a representation that modern citizens of this nation would identify with. Thomas Jefferson, on the other hand, is one of the presidents most fondly remembered, and the Lewis and Clark expedition, a crowning achievement in the young nation's history.

It is through examples such as this event that Vizenor begins overturning such comfortable assumptions and strikes at the heart of a "true" American attitude, one concealed within a posture of Jeffersonian benevolence and the simple inquisitive nature and admirable pioneering boldness of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. Beneath this idealized American facade lurks an attitude that is actually characterized, says Vizenor, by viciousness, barbarism, widespread cruelty, avarice, and perverse determinism. The "manners" of Vizenor's "manifest manners" points to this underlying attitude. Manifest manners are not overt actions, but a **mindset** that is hidden deep in the American psyche, the catalyst for actions that may seem on the outside either cruel or kind, but which all serve to support, reinforce, and reconstruct the basic idea of the American people, an idea which has seldom if ever been good for Indian people.

The word "manifest" of Vizenor's term is a play on Manifest Destiny, a driving force of American historical expansion, based in a religious right that justified that expansion and wrote it as progress instead of "barbarism." The role of Christianity in the subjugation of Indian peoples was/is important. Vizenor does not attack religion directly, but often makes sideways references that show the inherent role faith played and plays in the American manner.

> The missionaries of manifest manners have flourished for centuries with such ease in politics, education, communications, and literature. The simulated realities of tribal cultures, the most unsure representations, have informed presidents, journalists, college teachers, and publishers for several centuries. (23)

And, in one of his more clear statements of definition of the term:

> Manifest manners are scriptural simulations, the causal narratives of racialism, the denial of tragic wisdom, and the cultural leases of objectivism. (16)

Vizenor's postmodern tack is revealed in his mention of cause and objectivism. Later in the book, he refers to the "final vocabularies of manifest manners" (167). It is Vizenor's goal to challenge the hegemony of the American intent and mindset, wherever it is found (even—especially—in Indian people).

But intentions and mindsets are slippery things, so while Vizenor has to be satisfied with only pointing at manifest manners as the catalysts of dominating thoughts, he is able to more directly attack the texts in which evidence of the manner is found to obtain substance and power—the **literature of dominance**, the written account of America, and more particularly, the American account of the Indian.

> Vizenor's objections to conventional accounts of history center on three major issues: the deliberate or inadvertent slanting of the accounts as a result of political, religious, or cultural agendas; the limited vision of conventional history reflected both in its failure to admit certain kinds of evidence or ways of knowing and in its linear, monologic form of presentation; and the various ways in which history becomes a tool of containment and domination. Each of these conditions of historiography arises out of the long-standing colonial struggle for possession in America—not only possession of the land and its resources, but also ideological possession, because to a large degree the two have gone hand in hand: those who control the land have controlled the story (the his-story) of the land and its people. (Blaeser 83)

The literature of dominance includes written history, and the historiographic practice behind the texts. It includes anthropological

accounts, written almost exclusively by non-Indians, situating Indian people in ways that are necessary to mainstream America's manifest manner, but which are unacceptable to Vizenor and other Indians. It includes representations of Indian languages, "mistranslations" written by individuals who presumed (but were mistaken) that they could comprehend the tribal mind and intent, and rather simply turn Indian oral accounts and thoughts into English texts (10). It includes stereotypical images and caricatures, symbols that emphasize aspects of Indianness that may be based in fact (or might have been at one time), but which fall far, far short of doing any justice to a true conception of Indianness.

Vizenor's goal is to unravel the fabric of the literature of dominance and strike blows against manifest manners.

> Vizenor variously explicates this whole complicated situation, fictionalizes the account, attacks the inventors of the idealized Indian, satirizes the Native Americans who assume that romantic pose and the whites who buy into it, exhorts tribal people to avoid the time bound identities, and outlines strategies for surviving the invention. (Blaeser 54)

Postmodern Agent—The Postindian Warrior

In the context of manifest manners and the ubiquitous literature of dominance, the Indian agent is given opportunity for little else besides either assimilation or resistance[19], and it is strategies for survival that Vizenor is interested in pursuing. Vizenor uses the metaphor of a warrior to describe the action of a postindian, a writer who takes the battle to the enemy on the very site they have chosen to manifest their manners: language.

> The postindian warriors encounter their enemies with the same courage in literature as their ancestors once evinced on horses, and they create their stories with a new sense of survivance. The warriors bear the simulations of their time and counter the manifest manners of domination. (Manifest 4)

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[19] In the next section, I will deal with the only two choices presented to the colonized by a situation of colonization. See discussion on Albert Memmi, page 29.

But since the term warrior can itself invoke a manifest manner, because such simulations as "the mystic warrior of the plains" have long been written into the literature of dominance, Vizenor finds it necessary to upend the concept of warrior itself. This is where the play of trickster discourse comes in[20]. Blaeser describes the funny and serious activities of several trickster postindians that Vizenor writes about in his screen play, *Harold of Orange*.

> *Harold of Orange*...is a playful, imaginative, and humorous account of a scam perpetrated by the "Warriors of Orange" against a group of charitable foundation directors. The tribal tricksters, whose previous miniature orange grove venture was also a hoax, now gain another foundation grant with the proposal for pinch bean coffee, thus duping the establishment a second time. Vizenor's plot line refuses to lie that neatly on the page or on the screen, however. Through the interaction between the Warriors of Orange and the foundation directors, subplots develop and disclose the supposedly dominant action as merely the surface disguise for the true dramatic action: the subversion and symbolic upheaval of established order. (148)

Just as Vizenor's plot lines resist neat boundaries of description and serve often to conceal the "true dramatic action," through a postmodern approach Vizenor's postindian writer/agent is allowed multiple levels of interpretation of his role as a word warrior. In a stage production, the agent would be an actor; in a story, such as a short fiction or a novel or even a recounting of an experience, the person could be one of the characters, perhaps even the main character. But additionally, in stories presented on paper, on a stage, or even in our everyday interchanges with each other, there are additional characters who are sometimes foregrounded, more often unseen (secret agents?), but always important participants in any story: narrators, and authors as well.

Seymour Chatman, author of Story and Discourse, draws important distinctions between a narrative's content (story) and its expression

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[20] Vizenor warns of the dangers of overextending a metaphor, even that of the trickster: "The trickster is dead in models and mock tragedies in the same manner that a comic sign or metaphor is dead when overused, overrun and insolated in a monologue with science" (Narr. Chance 206).

(discourse). In an interesting discussion of the latter, Chatman writes a chapter on overt and covert narration. There Chatman argues that although the purposes of any author of a text may or may not be directly expressed through the voices of the written narrator or characters of a story, that purpose or intent is assuredly present. Additionally, the evidence of its presence, no matter how covert the author has been in the text's discursive expression, can be found. A narrator may be simply (or with sophistication) the vehicle by which a story is told. And the narrator may be more than that.

An example might serve to illustrate these various levels of identification with/as the "agent" of a text. In Vizenor's novel, Dead Voices, told in the first person, the following "authors" may be found. Of course, there is Vizenor himself. The name of the first person narrator of the story is avoided[21], but may be (and is often) thought of as Laundry. Laundry's tale is really an illicit retelling (because he has put it into print form, which was forbidden when it was told to him), of a tribal story that "belongs" to Bagese, a bear-woman who moved from the reservation to the city, and who has reinterpreted her traditional conception (identity) to have relevance in that new urban setting. Bagese' tendency to shape-shift between animal and human form (the possibility and encouragement of which is a basic premise of the book), adds another dimension to the concept of storyteller. Furthermore, Vizenor's text postmodernistically engages the reader in a participatory response. It is easy for the reader to visualize himself as Laundry, or to imagine taking up a "hand" of the Wanaki game that Vizenor/Laundry/Bagese describes. To the degree that the reader of Dead Voices perceives himself as removed from his tribal home—to have crossed the "treeline"—Vizenor has achieved a discursive engagement that very possibly reanimates portions of that reader's Indian identity. A transformation, from a "wordie" whose animal stories have been driven silent by the literature of dominance—"dead voices"—to one able to hear again, is what Vizenor envisions and offers. The reader

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[21] As is also the case in other Indian novels, including James Welch's Winter in the Blood. In D'Arcy McNickle's The Surrounded and John Joseph Matthews' Sundown, names (or the lack thereof) also play a proactive role in narrator identity construction.

becomes a postindian narrator and writes herself to counter the manifest manners in her own life.

This concept of multiple levels of agency in a story seems to me quite useful for a narrative analysis. It can also be quite confusing. But the premise upon which I have based my analysis of Vizenor's (and Cook-Lynn's) writing is that something of Vizenor is reflected in the stories that he tells, and, to the extent that he is successful in his endeavor to engage the reader, then something of the reader is made known by the parts of the text to which she responds. When issues of identity are part of the discussion, then the agency of the Indian author and reader must be layered onto the more obvious conceptions of the story's characters[22]. I wish here, of course, to point to the possibilities of covert or hidden agendas in the authors that I have studied, and in all of our writings and discussions about Indian identity in American Indian studies (including mine). And Vizenor himself wishes always to point to the hidden agenda of manifest manners, found in the literature of dominance.

Vizenor's conception of a postindian allows for all these possibilities, and as a postmodern, he is not even concerned about the loose ends. It's part of the fun, the chance. Going far beyond the characters that frequent his pages, crossing the boundaries of one novel to another, Vizenor's postindian is the Indian agent that takes on a discursive role in a modern setting. This includes the response of the reader, whom Vizenor invites to write between and away from his own lines. Such a vision attests to a multi-dimensional dynamic, a multi-cultural arena for academic discourse, and certainly a cross-disciplinary platform for American Indian study and thought.

Just as Chatman's idea that story and discourse can expand of the role of agent into a multi-leveled character/narrator/author, Vizenor writes a model where there are three possible roles for the postindian agent. But as far as he is concerned only one of these—the last—is a justifiable choice. These three are the **real**, the **invention** (a simulation), and the present **simulation of survivance**.

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[22] This dynamic gets even more interesting when you expand the number of people involved to a group level of comprehension, such as the identity of a community or culture. Unfortunately, there is room in this writing only to pose some possibilities regarding cultural identity, which I will do in my conclusion.

Our original Indian ancestors Vizenor calls the "tribal real," or manifestations of the "natural reason of the tribes" (Manifest Manners 4-5). These include such people as Sitting Bull, Black Hawk, Sacagawea, and others that we know once existed from the stories or "shadows" that they have left behind (10). But the real are now gone, and Vizenor makes an important distinction between those "real" Indians and **unreasonable inventions** of those individuals. Vizenor gives several examples: the stories that were written about Sitting Bull in the newspapers of his day or the mistranslation of his words by a white interpreter when the chief visited Philadelphia and lectured there (5)[23]. Such miswritten accounts are inventions, and these inventions frequent (almost to exclusion) the available literature on the American Indian—the literature of dominance.

Vizenor gives another example of an invented Indian that has done damage to the memory of the real—several plastic "manikins" of Indian tribal leaders that Encyclopedia Britannica once exhibited at shopping centers[24]. Aspects of this display, Vizenor reports, certify that it was as much a mistranslation as that perpetrated by Sitting Bull's interpreter. But most interesting is what Vizenor has to say about the **names** of the Indians who were represented as tribal manikins. The names of all twelve were written down in the Encyclopedia Britannica's diorama and in the exhibit's accompanying catalogue as well.

> But the unusual feature of the exhibition was that few of the names of the plastic figures were entered in the reference books published by the sponsors of the simulations. The want of manifest manners had excused or abandoned the entries of tribal names in the encyclopedia of dominance. (39)

Vizenor's point is obvious—Encyclopedia Britannica's hypocrisy is revealed when they promote their volumes with a display of individuals whose names were not important enough to be included in the really important text of the volumes themselves, according to Vizenor. When

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[23] Vizenor relates the story as told by Luther Standing Bear, who witnessed the event, who knew the Lakota language that Sitting Bull actually spoke, and who reacted to the faulty translation of the interpreter with humor--a method Indians have historically used to deal with such situations.

[24] Unfortunately, Vizenor does not include a specific reference to this incident. He says that it occurred "more than a decade ago" and quotes from the catalogue.

one compares how many eyes managed to take in the display to the number of people who read the books (the sale of which was Encyclopedia Britannica's real objective), then one is given some idea of the extent of the damage done by manifest manners.

To this extent, the **real** Indians, who we know to have existed, are distinguished in Vizenor's conception from the **invented** Indians, who found their way into the historical record (albeit perhaps unnamed). This latter is what Vizenor calls a **simulation**[25], in contrast to the real.

However, simulations are not all bad in Vizenor's book. The "real" is not recoverable in any case, and so the task assigned to the postindian is not one of recovery but of **survivance**. The third category is also a kind of simulation, but since it is written by the postindian, and written to counter instead of to propagate the literature of dominance, it is a simulation of survivance. In a truly postmodern turn, performed upon the huge shadow cast by a history of American literature and thought, Vizenor writes the postindian as something that is **not**, and then, as a result, something that is **new**.

> The postindian is the absence of the invention, and the end of representation in literature; the closure of that evasive melancholy of dominance. Manifest manners are the simulations of bourgeois decadence and melancholy. The postindian warrior is the simulation of survivance in new stories. (11)

Postmodern Purpose—Writing Simulations of Survivance

The simulations that Vizenor's postindian writes exist in direct contrast to the simulations of the invented Indian found in the historical literature.

> The postindian warriors hover at last over the ruins of tribal representations and surmount the scriptures of manifest manners with new stories; these warriors counter the surveillance and literature of dominance **with their own simulations** of survivance. The postindian arises from the earlier inventions of the tribes only to contravene the absence of the real with theatrical performances;

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[25] Blaeser notes that Vizenor borrows this term from Jean Baudrillard (56); see also Manifest Manners, page 9, for this connection.

> the theater of tribal consciousness is the recreation of the real, not the absence of the real in the simulations of dominance. (5, my emphasis)

Vizenor represents the product of centuries of inventions of the Indian as "ruins of tribal representation" and "scriptures of manifest manners," again an obvious reference to the role that religions played in the historical process. Like a phoenix, Vizenor's postindian "arises" from the archaic structures of these "earlier inventions," to resist and "contravene the absence of the real" in those simulations.

Here Vizenor points directly to language as the site in which the postindian conducts her work. Blaeser remarks that "Vizenor knows....the destiny of the American Indian rest with the language" (39). He uses a metaphor of the stage, a theatrical performance through which the postindian is now able to tap into the vestiges of "tribal consciousness" that have somehow managed to survive the process of the invented Indian simulations[26]. Vizenor's agent is the postindian who acts or writes, who engages in resistance, survivance, and trickster-ance.

Blaeser discusses the concept of "contemporary survivance" in the second chapter of her book on Vizenor. She characterizes his view of postindian survival with these descriptors: "a constant, delicate balancing, achieved primarily through the vehicles of story and humor" (63); "adaptability....work[ing] through the system to change it" (66); and creative humor. In this latter context, Blaeser recounts a story that Vizenor wrote, in which a tribal advocate attempts (and in the end, fails) to provide living quarters for a family that has moved to the city from a reservation[27].

> Although the arrangements ultimately fail, the tale is significant because it illustrates the survival power that the advocate's connection to oral tradition affords him. Grounded in tribal tradition, he confronts the sometimes hopeless situations of

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[26] I don't think Vizenor's statement in the above quotation ("the theater of tribal consciousness is the recreation of the real") really contradicts my statement a few paragraphs ago ("The 'real' is not recoverable in any case"), which I'll stand by. Vizenor leaves open the option for the word to be read as rec-reation rather than re-creation; in the spirit of postmodernism, I'll take the former interpretation. :-)

[27] The story is "Laurel Hole in the Day," from Wordarrows.

> contemporary life with realism, humor, and amazingly, optimism. (68-69)

Like Luther Standing Bear at Sitting Bull's mistranslated lecture[28], Vizenor's postindian must laugh to keep from crying, and, unsatisfied with a grand narrative of Indianness that seeks to limit and contain, this "trickster of liberty" "instead imagines or invents his own identity and place in society unimpeded by false stereotypes" (68). This is the postindian, Vizenor's postmodern simulation of survivance, and it is both a description of what he asks of the contemporary Indian agent and also a description of what he is about as an Indian writer.

Examples and Counterexamples of the Postindian

In Manifest Manners, Vizenor provides some real life examples of postindians. He names Charles Eastman, an individual more often remembered by Indian people as an "assimilationist" (51), but Vizenor calls for a reinterpretation by pointing to the circumstances and choices that Eastman faced in his day, and ultimately finds him to be a postindian warrior.

Vizenor explains that Eastman's father was one of the Santee who, by presidential pardon, narrowly escaped being hanged with the 38 at Mankato, Minnesota in 1862; subsequently he (Charles' father) was converted to Christianity and took the name of Eastman. Eastman "graduated with distinction from Dartmouth College and the Boston University School of Medicine," then became "one of the first tribal medical doctors determined to serve reservation communities" (47). Scarcely a month after arriving at his new appointment as doctor at Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, Eastman found himself "treat[ing] the few tribal survivors of the Wounded Knee Massacre" of 1890 (47). Vizenor writes Eastman in this way:

> His new name, education, and marriage were revolutions in his time; moreover, he was burdened with the remembrance of violence, the separation and conversion of his father, and the horror of the massacre at Wounded Knee. (47)

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[28] See earlier footnote, number 24.

In this context, Eastman still "resisted federal policies on reservations and in government schools" (49). Ultimately, Vizenor finds that Eastman's "resistance to manifest manners and dominance was honorable" (49), and that he "endured the treacherous turns and transvaluations of tribal identities, the simulations... of manifest manners, and the hardhearted literature of dominance" (50).

Despite admitting that the forms which Eastman ended up using to write his simulations were romantic (hence the charge that he was an "assimilationist"), Vizenor still feels that Eastman did the best he was able "to use metaphors as the simulations of survivance," qualifying him as a postindian.

> [Eastman] celebrated peace and the romance of tribal stories to overcome the morose remembrance of the Wounded Knee Massacre. Could there have been a wiser resistance literature or simulation of survivance at the time? What did it mean to be the first generation to hear the stories of the past, bear the horrors of the moment, and write to the future? What were tribal identities at the turn of the last century? (51)

The postmodern turn that Vizenor is making here does not necessarily excuse Eastman's romantic writings, but it does open up the story more often told of Eastman, providing a chance for him to be reinterpreted.

Ishi is another example that Vizenor uses to illustrate the postindian. The name Ishi, Vizenor points out, was not his real or "sacred tribal name," which he never shared with Alfred Kroeber[29], the anthropologist who found Ishi in 1911 and thereafter kept him in a California museum, where he died five years later of tuberculosis. Ishi, a word from his native tongue, meant simply "one of the people" (128). Vizenor focuses in Manifest Manners on the constant photographing of the bare-chested Ishi, which in the end had the effect of granting him a kind of immortality, a survivance.

> Ishi came out of the mountains and was invited to a cultural striptease at the centerfold of manifest manners and the histories

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[29] Blaeser says the anthropolist associated with Ishi was Karl Kroeber (58).

> of dominance; he crossed the scratch line of savagism and civilization with one name, and outlived the photographers. (127)

Vizenor provides as well, with huge sarcasm, numerous counter-examples of postindianism, pictures that, unlike Ishi and Eastman, are not the simulation of survivance he forwards. Several such examples are to be found, in Vizenor's opinion, among the leadership of the American Indian Movement. Vizenor particularly points to AIM leader Clyde Bellecourt as an anti-example of the postindian. He accuses Bellecourt of conducting "continuous conspiracies" with the government (157), of willingly "turn[ing] to manifest manners in certain situations" (160), and of being "discovered by the media and established as a leader by foundations and government institutions" (154). Vizenor labels Bellecourt a mercenary and a fraud—a "kitschyman," a wordplay on kitsch, an item from "a world of aesthetic make-believe and self-deception" (154)[30].

> Bellecourt is a kitschyman, one of the most contumacious cross-blood radical simulations in the nation. He is a word warrior on commission, a man who has abused the honor of tribal communities to enhance his own simulations of pleasure and radical durance....The arrogance of his presence must burden the most reasonable intimacies, the shadows in stories, and the traces of humor that arise in conversations. (155-6)

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[30] Blaeser also points out the possibility that "kitschyman" is also an Ojibwe word play. "The sound of kitschyman is very like *gichi-mookomaan* or *chi-mookomaan*, words for 'white man.' If Vizenor intends this verbal echo, the implication is of a yet more radical disjunction between tribal identity and Indian simulations" (61).

Another AIM leader that serves as anti-example in several places in Vizenor's account is Russell Means. The cover of Manifest Manners is a copy of an Andy Warhol painting of Means. Blaeser writes:

> The double simulation of the portrait Vizenor undercuts by using a variant of René Magritte's "Ceci n'est pas une pipe." He repeatedly follows his descriptive comments on Means with "**This portrait is not an Indian.**" The phrase becomes almost a chant, and is used throughout the "Postindian Warriors" essay to challenge tribal simulations and to allude to the larger discourse on identity politics. (61, my boldface)

The Tribal Voice in American Indian Studies

> *The role of Indians, themselves, in the storytelling of Indian America is as much a matter of "jurisdiction" as is anything else in Indian Country: economics, the law, control of resources, property rights. It goes without saying that it reflects our struggle with the colonial experience of our concomitant histories. If that sounds benign, it is anything but that. On the contrary, how the Indian narrative is told, how it is nourished, who tells it, who nourishes it, and the consequences of its telling are among the most fascinating—and, at the same time, chilling—stories of our time.*
> *Elizabeth Cook-Lynn "American Indian Intellectualism and the New Indian Story" 57)*

There is another story of the Indian, and telling it, a second group in American Indian studies whose point of view is fairly clearly definable. I will refer to them as the Tribal camp, mainly because this is term they use quite often to refer to themselves. Unlike postmodernism, where Vizenor is one of a few and clearly the writer of note in that arena, this group has many authors representing its tribal position. The story of the postindian is very much Vizenor's conception, while the tribal Indian story is more a shared vision, resulting in a more generalized telling. But there is one author of this group of voices who has written extensively in American Indian studies, and who has also secured an influential place for herself in the discipline by co-founding and editing one of the important

American Indian journals. I will incorporate several other authors, but focus mainly on the writing of Elizabeth Cook-Lynn.

Elizabeth Cook-Lynn is first and foremost a member of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe. Her first book, a volume of poems, was published in 1978. She is presently editor of the Wicazo Sa Review[31]. Cook-Lynn, for some time, was a professor in the academy (most recently, at Eastern Washington University in Cheney, Washington), but withdrew from academic life and returned to a residence on her home reservation in South Dakota, from which she continues to edit her journal and write. Most recently, Cook-Lynn has published a volume entitled, Why I Can't Read Wallace Stegner and Other Essays.

I mention Cook-Lynn's decision to physically withdraw from the university setting and return home because, for Cook-Lynn, this action is a form of "practicing what you preach"—and home is everything to the tribal mindset[32]. Both Cook-Lynn's life and texts exemplify what I have chosen to call here the Tribal mindset. In her autobiographical essay in I Tell You Now, edited by Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat, Cook-Lynn offers an explanation of her own reasons for writing. She begins with a description of her childhood home, then moves directly to the experiences of racism that she encountered in that location to set up a cultural dichotomy endemic to the tribal perspective.

> What happens to a reasonably intelligent child who sees him or herself excluded from a world which is created and recreated with the obvious intent to declare him or her *persona non grata*? Silence is the first reaction. Then there comes the development of a mistrust of that world. And, eventually, anger. That anger is what started me writing. Writing, for me, then, is an act of defiance born of the need to survive. I am me. I exist. I am a Dakotah. I write. It is **the quintessential act of optimism born of frustration**. It is an act of courage, I think. And, in the end, as Simon Ortiz says, it is an act that defies oppression. (57, my boldface)

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[31] Wicazo Sa means, in the Dakota language, Red Stick.

[32] Michael Wilson has written a very excellent piece on the idea of home as the central concept in contemporary Indian texts, titled ."Speaking of Home."

The descriptors Cook-Lynn uses to describe her own identity and motivation for writing is representative, I think, of the spirit that drives writers in the tribal tradition. Cook-Lynn identifies feelings of exclusion, mistrust, and frustration. She names oppression as the state (setting) in which she finds herself; elsewhere in her autobiographical essay (and pretty much all her writings), the source of that oppression comes immediately clear: "scholarly ineptitude and/or racism" (Swann and Krupat 57). The culprit in this racism is, for Cook-Lynn and the tribal thinker, most often mainstream European American society—the white man. Cook-Lynn writes here her conviction that the intent of white society is not simply ignorant in its ineptitude and racism, it is maliciously "intent" upon it. The end result of such a situation for an Indian person, at least for Cook-Lynn, is anger, and defiance.

This perception of being situated under an oppressive cloud of mainstream American history and present society, and the resulting feelings of resentment, anger, frustration, and a desire to strike back, are catalysts of the tribal mindset. That sounds like a hard statement, but I believe it to be true from reading and hearing the story they tell over and over again. The anger of the tribal writer does not always take such a vehement form as this short passage from Cook-Lynn's text reflects, but that essential fire burns all the time, and is the heart of the tribal agenda. References to past and current injustices, perpetuated by the greater society, are main tribal themes, and main motivations to tribal action. Furthermore, for the tribal writer, the silence of the past is not an option any more; like Cook-Lynn, they are taking up pen and as much control of the legal system and the academy as they can, in order to do something about it.

Tribal writers do have a lot to complain about. They live most often in reservation communities, which are often still beset with poverty and despair, and with stories of terrible circumstances still fresh in the tribal memory. The very lands that Indian nations claim are quite often not their original lands or home territories, and therefore stand in mute representation of a tragic history of dispossession and defeat. Most grating to the tribal thinker is the continuing perpetuated ignorance of American people about what really happened in American history, the as-

yet unspoken part that mainstream America played in the wiping out of many native cultures and nations, and the havoc they wreaked on the ones that managed to survive, to a present point of meager existence on the reservation.

Therefore, the texts tribal thinkers speak and write most often revolve mainly around two things: the **land** and the native **community**. Robert Allen Warrior devotes a major section of Tribal Secrets to "The Violation of Sovereign Land and Community in Deloria and Mathews." From the writings of these two historical Indian intellectual writers whose texts he concludes that "land and community are necessary starting points for the process of coming to a deep perception of the conflicts and challenges that face American Indian people" (85).

Tribal Setting—Colonialism, and a Defensible Essentialism

By focusing on starting points which draw geographical and cultural boundaries, and by emphasizing conflict as Warrior does, the tribal writer reveals an essential facet of the story they tell: there must be an enemy. Tribal writers position Indian people in the shadow of white mainstream America, and their texts are filled with pointers to the past, historical references which serve as tragic causes and warnings. Those stories, told over and over again, are constructors and shapers of the tribal Indian identity. The tribal historical account ends with Indian peoples being militarily defeated and geographically dispossessed, but—and this is important—not cowed mentally and spiritually. Indian nations still retain cultural knowledge and reservation communities that are small footholds upon the land. And from those locations, the tribal thinker and writer now seeks to use language to strike back at colonialism and the colonizers, who they perceive as still involved in expropriative activities.

Colonialism is a major theme for the tribal writer. In her essay, "Who Stole Native American Studies," Cook-Lynn argues consistently and at length for "liberation from Western colonialism" (25). She says that "colonizing, unlike slavery, is not a crime" in today's society (13). She remarks that "even the rise in the 1970s of reservation-based Indian college systems thoughout the country ended up with their being bureaucratized and colonized much like the Bureau of Indian Affairs" (15).

Elsewhere, Cook-Lynn directs her anger at Indian people who participate in "explicit and implicit accommodation to the colonialism of the 'West'" (Intellectualism 67). But mostly, Cook-Lynn focuses her attention on the mainstream education system, where "Natives continue to be objectified, and colonialism is fostered" (Who Stole 20), and where "the interests of mostly non-Native social scientists... leave little room for the voice of Native American except as 'victim' or 'other' or 'informant'" (19). Main blame for the current unsatisfactory state of Indian scholarship falls on the colonizing practice of mainstream America, as far as Cook-Lynn is concerned.

> In Native American Studies much of what has been addressed in terms of research and topics for writing and publishing has been directed over the past century by policy think tanks, politicians, and funding agencies rather than Native scholars or even Native populations. This is another of the ugly realities of historical and continuing colonization. (22)

In addition to colonization, Cook-Lynn also uses the terms genocide, deicide, racism, subversion, exploitation, encroachment, containment, and dispossession to describe the activities of the society at large in their relationship with Indian people. In the end, this chosen stance of preoccupation with the colonialism of the mainstream society causes the tribal writer to take a position which is necessarily nationalistic and separatist, and sometimes, essentialist.

Albert Memmi describes colonialism in detail, and the relationships that exist between the Colonizer and the Colonized, in his book by that title. In the end, says Memmi, an individual existing under the shadow of colonialism must choose either to assimilate or to resist.

> Assimilation being abandoned, the colonized's liberation must be carried out through a recovery of self and of autonomous dignity. Attempts at imitating the colonizer required self-denial; the colonizer's rejection is the indispensable prelude to self-discovery. That accusing and annihilating image must be shaken off; oppression must be attacked boldly since it is impossible to go around it. (128)

To accomplish this refusal, Memmi goes on to note that "the colonized's xenophobia and even a certain racism, must make their return" (129-130). Racism is a harsh term, but Memmi uses it purposefully to explain the severity necessary to an escape from colonialism.

Cook-Lynn "argues for decolonization through third-world *nationalism*" in the introduction to Why I Can't Read Wallace Stegner (xiv), and in "Who Stole Native American Studies," she echoes some of Memmi's arguments while expressing the belief that essentialism is sometimes necessary to accomplish something good in American Indian studies.

> Indian scholars have suggested that the term *essentialism* is, in fact, **a defensible notion**, that Indians must fight off domination by outsiders in order to make themselves heard....The truths of the colonized must take precedence in the discipline that is called Native American Studies as the only way to resist colonialism in academic and in real life. (20, my boldface)

The appeal to Indian scholars that Cook-Lynn makes here could be a powerful argument. Unfortunately, she does not identify the Indian scholars who suggest the brand of essentialism she espouses[33]. The point here is that the colonialist context in which the tribal thinker writes herself makes almost prerequisite a certain nationalist and essentialist attitude. Cook-Lynn makes no apologies for her tribal emphasis and stance. It was through the historical efforts of tribal resistance that cultural tradition and knowledge have been maintained into the modern era, and it will be by resistance to contemporary encroachments, Cook-Lynn and other tribal writers are convinced, that Indian identity will be preserved and maintained into the next.

Tribal Setting 2—Indians in the Academy

A discussion of setting in the tribal Indian story would be unbalanced if I mentioned only their concern with colonialism and dispossession. It is important to note that there is a positive and pro-active site of tribal resistance and, for Cook-Lynn especially, that site is

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[33] She does often point (including in this essay--"Who Stole") to a group of Indian scholars as a source or origin of her tribal approach, which I will discuss in the next subsection. Perhaps she means those scholars.

scholarship. Like Vizenor, Cook-Lynn believes that language holds the key to an Indian solution[34], and while many tribal writers concentrate on legal and legislative discourse, Cook-Lynn's focus remains the academy, despite her withdrawal from formal teaching.

> An examination of the dichotomy between the stories that Indian America tells and the stories that White America tells is crucial to the current literary criticism wars. And who gets to tell the stories[35] is a major issue of our time. (Wallace Stegner 64)

Cook-Lynn seeks to maintain an Indian presence and to wrest from the west the privilege of telling all the stories. American Indian studies offers the best chance for Indian scholars to contribute to this literary presence. Since literature is the primary site in which errors in the account continue to be propagated, it is therefore the first place that Indians need to take control.

However, the Indian's relationship to mainstream colonialism is always a central issue to Cook-Lynn, and in "Who Stole Native American Studies," she notes the uncomfortable position Indians and American Indian studies must maintain within Western culture and the contemporary American academy.

> The truth is that Native American Studies does not "fit," nor can it, nor should it. Rather, its meaningfulness stems from the fact that it challenges almost everything that America has to offer in education and society....It confronts head on the ideals and hopes of one of the most materialistic and technological nations on earth by insisting that a society based in capitalistic democracy and on the exploitation of natural resources *for profit* is immoral, and it calls for the building of reservation-based institutions of economics and

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[34] Although I believe the site of language to be a similarity between the two camps, it is also a place where they are distinctly different. Blaeser writes, "With the contemporary conflicts about treaty rights, trust status, and tribal sovereignty, the general public may well believe that "the Indian problem" continues to situate itself around land rights. Vizenor knows otherwise. The destiny of the American Indian rests with language" (39); and, "[Vizenor's] primary goal, in fact, seems to center on preserving or creating a space of survival. Oddly, that space of survival may be more imaginative than physical" (39). Compare this to the epigraph which I used to open this section.

[35] Renato Rosaldo expresses a similar sentiment in Culture and Truth: "When people leave a decision-making room and one hears that a consensus was reached, remember to ask: 'Who was in the room when the decision was made?'" (xii).

> education that fit the values of the Native peoples who live there....The very presence of treaty-established indigenous Native American nations at the close of the twentieth century is a shining testimony to the potential for freedom of a true democracy. (25)

Cook-Lynn proclaims here the possibilities of a tribal model for constructing knowledge and deconstructing the American educational system, despite the fact that the attempt for such a transformation in/of the academy has not yet been successful in the past.

> For whatever reasons, fewer and fewer Indian intellectuals who had managed to infiltrate the university systems kept to the **origins** of the disciplinary scheme concerning the defense of First-Nation status and indigenousness. (Who Stole 15)

The reasons for failure are not unclear to Cook-Lynn. She knows exactly the kind of person it will take to accomplish the goals she has in mind. She looks to the early days of American Indian studies, the First Convocation of American Indian scholars, and the Jeannette Henry and Rupert Costo canon of Indian texts that came out of the Indian Historian press in the 1970s and 80s (Who Stole 9, and Wallace Stegner 5). That literary tradition contains the seeds of a tribal way of thinking and acting, and Cook-Lynn bemoans the fact that those works are now "routinely ignored by many of the new scholars who claim to be Native American Studies practitioners" (5). Still, those who wrote the original tribal agenda stand as models for Cook-Lynn's conception of the tribal Indian agent.

> Native scholars who began the development of the discipline over twenty years ago argued that being Indian was what mattered in the call for new epistemologies to be developed....What they argued for was a seat at the table, not only a seat at the table from which they had been excluded for four hundred years nor a seat as "informant," but a primary seat as transformationists within the bounds of scholarship. (Who Stole 22)

Tribal Agent—Indigenist Intellectual

Within a context of colonialism and dispossession (not to mention a hot seat at a hostile academic table), Cook-Lynn's conception of the tribal

agent will need to have **strong ties to home**, be a successful **intellectual**, and be **motivated to action**, activities that improve the situation of tribal peoples. Her tribal orientation will manifest itself in her thoughts, speech and actions.

Indigenist is the term that Ward Churchill favors for tribal connection. Churchill has recently published a collection of his own essays, From a Native Son: Selected Essays in Indigenism, 1985-1995. Churchill opens one of them, "I Am Indigenist: Notes on the Ideology of the Fourth World," in this way:

> Very often in my writings and lectures, I have identified myself as being "indigenist" in outlook. By this, I mean that I am one who not only takes the rights of indigenous peoples as the highest priority of my political life, but who draws on the traditions—the bodies of knowledge and corresponding codes of value—evolved over many thousands of years by native peoples the world over. This is the basis on which I not only advance critiques of, but conceptualize alternatives to, the present social, political, economic, and philosophical status quo. (509)

Cook-Lynn's conception of agent is also involved in a societal critique, based on a traditional tribal perspective, and she too uses the term indigenousness extensively in her texts. In "Who Stole Native American Studies," Cook-Lynn even changes indigenous to "endogenous" when describing the study of First Nations cultures and history.

> This meant that this discipline would...emerge from *within* Native people's enclaves and geographies, languages and experiences, and it would refute the exogenous seeking of truth through isolation (i.e., the "ivory tower") that has been the general principle of the disciplines most recently in charge of indigenous study, that is history, anthropology, and related disciplines all captivated by the scientific method of objectivity. (11)

Once culturally connected, the successful tribal Indian agent must have the kind of skills that are necessary for successful arguing along mainstream academic avenues. Society must, to some extent, be changed from the inside, and what Cook-Lynn believes is needed is an Indian

intellectual. She notes that this combination of terms is something of a "bizarre concept."

> While there are images of Jewish intellectuals, European intellectuals, British scholars, African novelists there is no image of an American Indian intellectual. There is only that primitive figure who crouches near the fire smoking a sacred pipe or, arms outstretched, calls for the gods to look down upon his pitiful being. Worse, the drunk, demoralized Chingachgook sitting alongside the road, a medallion with George Washington's face imprinted on it hanging about his neck. Or the Red Power militant of the 1960s. (Intellectualism 57)

But Cook-Lynn believes that Indian intellectualism is possible, and necessary.

Cook-Lynn's intellectual, however, is not someone that might be accused of being "purely academic"—someone with book learning but no practical experience or wisdom. Cook-Lynn has in mind a thinker, a persistent scholar and an insightful critic. But what is most distinct about Cook-Lynn's picture of the Indian intellectual, what "distinguishes Native American intellectualism from other scholarship is its interest in tribal indigenousness" (66). The academy is a tough road for an Indian, and the sides are littered with those who grew frustrated enough with the academic process that they simply gave up, and with Indians that started out with tribal intentions, but some how lost track of their indigenism, perhaps, as Cook-Lynn described earlier, because they "infiltrated the university system" so successfully.

Indeed, Cook-Lynn suggests that the academy may not be the best place to find the kind of intellectuals that are needed: "There is now a public voice in native critical analysis, and it comes from many sources" (Wallace Stegner 6). She is convinced that "Indian scholars...suggest that Native intellectuals are more likely to come from non-academic enclaves" (Intellectualism 70). Cook-Lynn recommends Vine Deloria, Jr.'s suggestion that "a turn away from academe toward tribal-knowledge bases that exist at a grassroots level is the answer to the complex dilemmas of

modern scholarship in Indian Affairs" (70)[36]. The essential and "vital functions" of intellectualism, for Cook-Lynn, are political and activist: "to change the world, to know it, and to make it better by knowing how to seek appropriate solutions to human problems" (71).

> The essential nature of intellectual work and critical reflection for American Indians is to challenge the politics of dispossession inherent in public policy toward Indian nationhood. (71)

The tribal Indian agent, therefore, grounded, equipped and willing to fly in the face of academic pressure, will be **motivated to action**. In other words, the agent must be an activist on some level. Cook-Lynn believes that if "the ethical relationship between tribal nationhood and the imagination is ignored or falsified, flawed scholarship is the result" (Wallace Stegner xiii). It is unconscionable for an Indian—especially the Indian intellectual—to "just get by."

> "The imagination and the intellect must be held accountable to humanity, and I know of no way other than 'critical' evaluation of one's fellow human beings to say what the accountability amounts to in terms of our creative lives, intellectual pursuits, and human communities." (Wallace Stegner 5)

Especially in American Indian studies, she goes on to say in this context.

Finally, Cook-Lynn's Indian agent most definitely will **not be a mixed-blood**. She directly attacks the practices of contemporary mixed-blood Indian writers in "American Indian Intellectualism and the New Indian Story." Cook-Lynn unites the above three features into an unequivocal indictment of mixed-bloods as failed Indian agents. In other words, they are not culturally grounded, they cannot be called intellectuals, and they do not act—or if they do, it is a self-oriented action rather than one which might do any good for larger groups of Indian people.

She finds, in mixed-blood writings, "few useful expressions of resistance and opposition to the colonial history at the core of Indian/White relations" (67) and "explicit accommodation to the colonialism of the 'West'" (67). She is angered that mixed-blood writers

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[36] This is the premise of Deloria's new volume, Red Earth, White Lies.

communicate in their texts that "a return to tribal sovereignty on Indian homelands seems to be a lost cause" (69), which promotes the "notion of the failure of tribal governments as Native institutions and of sovereignty as a concept" (67). Cook-Lynn writes that mixed-bloods do not "contribute substantially to intellectual debates of First Nationhood" (68).

> Mixed-blood literary instruction may be viewed as a kind of liberation phenomenon or, more specifically, a deconstruction of a tribal-nation past, hardly an intellectual movement that can claim a continuation of the tribal communal story or an ongoing tribal literary tradition....They are **failed intellectuals** because they have not lived up to the responsibility of transmitting knowledge between certain diverse blocs of society. This would suggest that the mixed-blood literary movement arose as a result of the assimilation inherent in cultural studies driven by American politics and imperialism. (69-70, my emphasis)[37]

Cook-Lynn gives a list of writers who meet this description: Gerald Vizenor heads the list, followed by Louis Owens, Wendy Rose, Maurice Kenny, Michael Dorris, Diane Glancy, Betty Bell, Thomas King, Joe Bruchac, and Paula Gunn Allen. Cook-Lynn goes directly after Vizenor and his postmodernism, charging that it "focuses on individualism rather than First Nation ideology" (67) In contrast, the Tribal group focuses on Indian communities and nations, and on the individual who chooses to prioritize the national interest of Indians.

Therefore, it seems that tribalists are concerned with **maintaining (ancient) lines of identity**. They are antagonized by mixed-bloods who would "water down" the nations, and by postmodern approaches that **open up** possibilities, overturn and open up tribal traditions and gates as easily as they mess with mainstream doctrines. It comes back to that: boundaries between cultures. For the tribalist, the boundary of identification is a sacred line. Past passings of this line have resulted in oppression and dispossession, and no more can be afforded. The tribal person draws these lines in black and white. with no gray areas, and

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[37] I must note here that Cook-Lynn inserts this last bit into Antonio Gramsci's mouth who "might have theorized" them...

defends and pointedly closes off the territory to outsiders.[38] In this tribal process, the mixed-blood may very easily be situated on the outside.

For Cook-Lynn and other tribal writers concerned with scholarship, the territorial lines are drawn at the question of who is to be allowed to do academic research and writing on American Indians. Their answer is clear: Indians only[39]. This makes mainstream society nervous to the point of labeling the tribal view as essentialist. Tribalists like Cook-Lynn are not concerned with such labels. The tribal writer is about transforming the situation which has been unkind and unfair to Indians in the past, if they can. It has to do with the tribal purpose: to prove that Indian tribes are sovereign nations.

Tribal Purpose—Transformation through American Indian Scholarship

Sovereignty is a key word in the tribal resistance agenda. It is a tribal power buzzword, one of the main solutions to the challenges of Indian lands and communities, and one of the quickest terms to be invoked by tribal thinkers. The term has huge currency with the tribalist, but it is also ambiguous, being used by different writers in different ways. Warrior uses the term often in his book, after writing an early hedge in his introduction where he acknowledges that certain terms, "such as sovereignty, self-determination, tribal, and process appear without much detailed specification of how I am using them" (xxi). Like "postmodernism," our discipline needs to give attention to a better articulation of the term, sovereignty. Cook-Lynn does some of this definitional work, and also uses the term extensively in her writing, usually linking "sovereignty (history and law) [with] indigenousness (culture, place, and philosophy)", which for her are the two cornerstones of the American Indian studies discipline that should be but is not yet (Who Stole 11). She is waiting for that transformation, and willing to work to make it happen.

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[38] A literal illustration of this is found in a recent article in Indian Country Today where Navajo President Hale called for road blockade of U.S. highways that cross reservation lands, in order to make a show of sovereign rights.

[39] See also, in this regard, Karen Gayton Swisher's article "Why Indian People Should Be the Ones to Write about Indian Education".

For Cook-Lynn, sovereignty involves a "political and intellectual stance" (16), based on the "rights of citizenship established by Indian tribal nations and the U.S. government in treaties" (13). The order Cook-Lynn has chosen in this description—with tribal nations listed first—is very likely intentional and significant; a sovereign matter such as identifying who is a citizen is not a decision to be made by the federal government, nor should it be determined by a blood quantum assessment or any other Bureau of Indian Affairs-generated criteria. Tribal writers argue that treaties are legal documents, initiated by nation states who were and still are, as far as the tribalist is concerned, **equal**, and because the federal (and state and local) government(s) of the United States seems to either have forgotten or never recognized that fact, the tribalist works overtime to educate the mainstream society back into a proper relationship. Especially in need of this re-education, says Cook-Lynn, are mainstream academic "sociologists and university hiring committees" (13).

> Few listened to the pleas of Native educators who said their tribal nations had never given up the right to say who their citizens were and that citizen-ship status was one of the several indispensable criteria of authenticity. (13)

Sovereign issues (such as the assessment of who is or is not Indian), tribalists say, are not the business of non-Indians, they are Indian business. The title essay of "Why I Can't Read Wallace Stegner" is precisely about this issue. Wallace Stegner, a well-known American novelist and essayist, claimed to be native North American, but Cook-Lynn rejects his claim as fraudulent, immoral and ignorant.

> In his misunderstanding and dismissal of indigenousness and his belief in the theory that American Indians were "vanishing" he was much like writers everywhere who offer only a narrowness of vision and a confused history. (32)

Cook-Lynn indicts Stegner's colonialist mindset (and she also brings in an important term which I will deal with at the end of this paper), when she concludes that "there is, perhaps, no American fiction writer who has been more successful in serving the interests of a nation's **fantasy** about itself than Wallace Stegner" (29).

These kind of mainstream misunderstandings are transformed, and Indian sovereignty finds life, for to Cook-Lynn, among the works of Indian scholars who construct (at least) three things: **tribal models of literary criticism**, **new epistemologies**, and the **Native American canon**.

Cook-Lynn's response to a Euro-American mainstream that "seeks to declare the indigene *persona non grata* and imaginatively dominate the literary landscape" (Wallace Stegner 64) is "the emerging academic voice of the Indian" (76). Here we find a tribal purpose and agent that is hopeful and constructive. Tribal models of literary criticism must be pursued in order to challenge the traditional mainstream ones that, like Wallace Stegner, fall far short of any reasonable understanding of Indian people. These models should be "autonomous" from white influence (Intellectualism 69). Tribal models, if pursued as Cook-Lynn hopes, will increase themselves exponentially, resulting in even larger achievements, the development of tribal epistemologies.

> Historically powerless people can defend their cultures and nations through engaging in the analysis of what has gone wrong and what is needed to develop new epistemologies....The potential for the development of the discipline of Native American Studies in American universities has not been nurtured in appropriate ways nor has it been actualized since its inception in the way that other epistemologies have been, feminism, for example, or Black Studies, which has produced major African American intellectuals speaking out on all manner of national issues. (Who Stole 24)

Despite the challenges and the lack of progress in the past, the route to these methodological and epistemological transformations is found, according to Cook-Lynn, in the writings of Indian authors. And not just the oral tradition. Warrior shows that there is a centuries-old tradition of written literature and thought, which may be used to further the discipline and the place of Indian people in the society at large. And, of course, to support the tribal political agenda. Cook-Lynn uses the word canon, without flinching. She points to the canon that came out of the early days of American Indian studies, and says that the "potential canon is underdeveloped" (Who Stole 21).

An Indian literary canon, Indian epistemologies, and tribal models of literary criticism have the potential to be "major vehicles of tribal intellectual empowerment" (Wallace Stegner xiv), believes Cook-Lynn. And political empowerment is very clearly a facet of Cook-Lynn's tribal objective.

> It is the Indian Studies view that research is the component of the field that will ultimately allow us to revitalize ourselves as Indian nations of people and transcend the reactionary, defensive stance that has been so much a part of our academic and real-life experiences. (Wallace Stegner 16)

"Indian tribes," she argues, "are not like any other American landowners. They are sovereign, separate, and distinct peoples, with signed treaty rights, and **more work needs to be done to articulate that idea on behalf of the indigenes**." (Wallace Stegner 25, my emphasis)

Examples and a Counterexample of the Tribal Writer

Cook-Lynn writes that examples of tribal writers are sadly lacking. She points backwards to Jeannette Henry and Rupert Costo, the editors and publishers of the now discontinued Indian Historian Press, who published the volume Indian Voices: The First Convocation of American Indian Scholars. Her approved list of contemporary authors is headed by Vine Deloria, Jr., who "began to write almost single-handedly the texts for the introductory courses in the discipline" (Who Stole 16). Interestingly enough, she finds reason to mention that Deloria is "based in Colorado, far away from his own tribal lands," however she also goes on to say that "he continues to respond to requests by his tribally based contemporaries" (Who Stole 16). As for new tribal writers, Cook-Lynn knows of only a "precious few who have begun to examine in the last decade of the century what it means in academic terms to possess an American Indian tribal future sovereignty" (Who Stole 16). She names Tom Holm, Robert Warrior, and David Wilkins.

Another example of a contemporary tribal voice is Ray Young Bear, who wrote Black Eagle Child: The Facepaint Narratives and Remnants of the First Earth. "Occasionally, but not often," Cook-Lynn says of Black Eagle Child, "I review a book that I consider flawless. This was one of

those occasions" (17). And she names him as an "astonishing exception" to today's "American Indian artists, novelists, poets, and scholars who are publishing their own works [with] an *art for art's sake* approach" (Intellectualism 71). Young Bear intersperses his autobiographical novels with portions of his own native Meskwaki tongue.

An anti-example of Cook-Lynn's tribal agent is Michael Dorris, who wrote The Broken Cord, which Cook-Lynn reviews in a Wallace Stegner essay. Cook-Lynn's problem with Dorris is that he spoke out in the novel for Adam, an FAS (fetal alcohol syndrome) child, but lays the entire blame for the situation on the Lakota woman who bore the child. Cook-Lynn takes issue with Dorris' suggestion that incarceration of the women who are at fault is the proper course to take in such cases. She lays blame back on the doorstep of Dorris himself, who, by adopting the child and taking him "outside of the specific tribal perspective" broke "one of the first rules of tribal sovereignty" (15). Cook-Lynn accuses Dorris of "exploit[ing] the life of his child" (16).

> "I know of no other Native American scholar who for public recognition or cause has so 'used' his adoptive relatives, a ploy we have often criticized as ordinarily reserved for non-Indian anthropologists and researchers" (16).

With this characterization of Dorris, Cook-Lynn effectively puts him in a category with oppressive whites, including those who have stolen away Indian children through legal means. This position adds to a definition of tribalism by pointing toward the "specific tribal perspective" and to the local community of a child's "relatives and their place of birth."

Conclusion—Fantasies, Turns, and Secrets

> *The best candidates for conversion are often people who are no longer strongly committed to their rhetorical vision.* *(Ernest Bormann 13)*

One of the reasons I chose these two authors is because they both see narrative as important. Gerald Vizenor says "Native American Indian histories and literatures, oral and written, are imagined from 'wisps of narratives,'" and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn writes about "the need of human beings to narrate, to tell the story of their own lives and the lives they have known, the intellectual need to inquire and draw conclusions which

is simply a part of being human"[40]. Even though the two camps are different, even stand in opposite corners of an epistemological and methodological ring, I have found it interesting to keep reading and find out that they also have much in common. The decision on which of these narratives is more compelling, I will leave to the reader. Perhaps there is a third space which is better ground altogether.

I can see strengths (and weaknesses) in both stories of the Indian, and advantages (and disadvantages) for American Indian studies in taking either side. But the most interesting product of this study for me has less to do with the specific features or arguments that any one camp makes, and more to do with how they go about making those arguments, and why. The theorists I mentioned earlier in this paper (Momaday, Bruner, Rosaldo) talk convincingly about the role that narrative plays in constructing identity. Albert Memmi points out the power of colonialism as a setting, a setting which is an important feature of both camps. He helps us understand how difficult it will be to extricate ourselves from a powerful story like "the American way." And Seymour Chatman points to how "ways" can be covered over and either intentionally or unintentionally ignored. These are all aspects of the issues we face in American Indian studies when thinking and writing about identity.

Other theorists have concentrated their attention on the possibilities and problems inherent in the concept of grand or compelling narratives. In Actual Minds, Possible Worlds, Jerome Bruner discusses canonical autobiographical texts ("Actual" 130). W. Lance Bennett and Murray Edelman, political scientists, powerfully show how "stock political plots" can be used to allow "domestic and international power systems" to remain in power (157).

> It is possible for cultures to cling firmly to understandings of their environments even when those understandings are poorly suited to critical inquiry, learning, and change. (158)

Bennett and Edelman desire to expose "formulaic stories that disguise ideological rigidity and introduce unproductive opposition into political

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[40] Narrative Chance (3); Wallace Stegner (77).

dialogue" (161), and replace them with more productive forms of discourse.

> If stories can be constructed to wall of the senses to the dilemmas and contradictions of social life, perhaps they can also be presented in ways that provoke intellectual struggle, the resolution of contradiction, and the creation of a more workable world order. (162)

This sentence sums up what I have attempted by writing this essay.

Perhaps the best source I have found that describes in detail the process that occurs when powerful narratives are told to construct group identities is an essay by Ernest Bormann. The term he uses to describe the compelling narrative is **fantasy**. He is quick to point out his is not the common usage of the term—not "something imaginary, not grounded in reality"—but the "creative and imaginative interpretation of events that fulfills a psychological or rhetorical need" (5). This definition is rooted in his social scientific theory of "symbolic convergence," which Bormann uses to conduct an "Analysis of Seminal American Fantasies." Narrative is a key factor in Bormann's theory.

> The basic communicative dynamic of the theory is the sharing of group fantasies which brings about symbolic convergence for the participants. Investigators in small group communication laboratories discovered the process of sharing fantasies when they investigated dramatizing messages and their effect on the group. A dramatizing message is one that contains one or more of the following: a pun or other wordplay, a double entendre, a figure of speech, an analogy, an anecdote, allegory, fable or narrative.

Bormann found such dramatizing messages provoke varying responses among group members, and the intensity of these responses can be gauged by the extent of their participation in the fantasy. Some stories fell on deaf ears.

> Some of the dramatizing, however, caused a greater or lesser symbolic explosion in the form of a **chain reaction**. As the members shared the fantasy, the tempo of the conversation increased. People grew excited, interrupted one another, laughed, showed emotion, and forgot their self-consciousness. (5, my emphasis)

It's easy to imagine how this works. Relating an experience in a business or social setting can produce a series of similar (or opposite) experience narratives from the listeners-now-become-participants. The first paragraph of this essay describes a possible response to a powerful story that has become a dramatizing message. Bormann's study foregrounds the **group transformation** that occurs when a fantasy is shared—a created group dynamic that powerfully binds the sharers together. Individual participants in such a situation have constructed an identity with each other, and the credit belongs not to a single convincing individual or argument, but to a shared narrative.

Chain-reaction causing stories do not even have to be real experiences of the group members, Bormann says; that's why fiction can be such a powerful and meaningful experience for many. In their essay, Bennett and Edelman show that stock political plots are actually most powerful if they are left open-ended, inviting the listener to fill in the details, ones which are relevant to their own immediate experience (163). Bormann tells how fantasy chain reactions can be and often are initiated by the use of a (seemingly) simple symbolic allusion, a trigger or cue invoked by a group member (6). Of course, such cues depend on participants' knowledge of the situation or narrative to which the cues refer, but, if such knowledge does exist, a trigger, no matter how cryptic, can be as powerful as the entire story, or even more powerful, since telling the entire story becomes unnecessary (even redundant). Bormann also shows that the short**cut**ting promoted by triggers can produce a short-**circuit**ing of the reasoning process on the part of those who share the fantasy (7).

Bormann points to the generalizations that often occur with a compelling fantasy, and the resulting powerfully unified vision for a group or community. This rhetorical vision, according to Bormann, is "often integrated by the sharing of a dramatizing message that contains **a master analogy**" which "pulls the various elements together into a more or less elegant and meaningful whole" (8, my emphasis). Because the rhetorical community Bormann is describing has now achieved a high level of symbolic maturity, their rhetorical vision can be (and often is) "indexed" by a slogan or label. This is a special form of symbolic cueing, an allusion

"not just to details of fantasy themes and types but to a total coherent view of an aspect of their social reality" (8).

Bormann's theorizing in this regard offers a compelling look at the power involved in narratives, not only to create individual and group identity, but also to potentially mask (intentionally or not) the evidence of a group-building experience. This phenomenon, utilized as a rhetorical device, is indeed powerful narrative discourse. When applied to the context of American Indian studies and the narratives that I have suggested here are being told by two camps in the discipline, we have a basis for participating in at least a portion of the healthy and constructive disciplinary critique that Warrior calls for in Tribal Secrets. If we are seeking unity in the discipline, then, according to Bormann, a compelling story/fantasy may be just the thing we need. But, knowing narrative's power, we need to be critical and careful in our discursive choice-making.

It is my hope that the method that I have employed here will be helpful to readers in the discipline that are looking for, not an end to the identity debates, but a reasonable way to get through them, and some tools for reading the stories of Indian identity that are being offered by the writers of our discipline. There are many loose ends in this essay that need critical exploration. At the least, I suggest other narrative analyses, getting at the possibility of a compelling narrative, be it one of the postindian or the tribalist, or other concepts. such as romanticism or activism or victimization.

Finally, let us return to the frame of the arrowmaker, a compelling story, for it may serve as a metaphor for this discussion. Both the postmodern and tribal camps, it turns out, clearly see an enemy; the Indian exists in relationship to the white man, the western European encroacher. That historical and present fact is too big to get around; it is indelibly imprinted upon and incorporated into the Indian psyche. Resistance to what "the white man" has done and does will remain a central concept for Indians and Indian studies. But is it true that any conception we make of ourselves, any story we tell of the Indian, must necessarily begin in the shadow of the white man? There are issues of subjectivity there that need to be explored by Indian intellectuals.

Both camps focus on the Indian man and woman inside the lodge. The tipi wall is a barrier that works both ways, with small seams and cracks that allow peeking, but essentially setting a cultural boundary—even if the people pass, the culture does not. The door of the tipi must exist, but it is not a part of this story; the lodge wall is a clear cultural separator—the question is who is on the inside. The postmodern writes herself **into** the tent, tapping the oral tradition in such a way that the agent finds herself increasingly and cumulatively taking form as a resident, an insider. This is not an illegitimacy for Vizenor, a person gaining a form they are not entitled to, but rather a peeling back of layers of blindness that have been brought on Indian people by the historical literature of dominance. Identity is an emancipation. Not so for the tribal person, who was (presumably) never in doubt about who he was and where he stood in relationship to the enemy. The tribal writer writes otherness **out** of the lodge. The enemy in the story is outside the tent, but still inside the camp—a cause for alarm. There is, in the beginning, an ambiguity, a possibility that must be allowed for the individual outside the tipi to be Kiowa. But in the end, the imposter is found out, and found to be, after all, the enemy. The postmodern concept places the mixed-blood on the inside; the tribal places the mixed-blood on the outside. And since the two groups use the term in different ways, perhaps a next task is to address a definition (story) of "mixed-blood."

Both camps contemporize the situation in which the arrowmaker finds himself and his wife, and frame the new site of tension and cultural encounter within language. It is the Indian intellectual, the thinker and the writer of that thinking that will do battle to transform a deplorable Indian situation into something new and better. For both, words of resistance are the arrows that will strike death to the thoughts and conceptions and plans that the enemy outside is entertaining, if his thoughts are targeting (intending) the demise of the Indians inside the lodge—and the story clearly implies that this was/is the case. For Vizenor, wordarrows will destroy false and stifling "Indian" inventions. For Cook Lynn, tribal intellectuals will transform the academy with new epistemologies.

But perhaps most interesting is the language which **preceded and encased** the final lethal blow of the arrow. The story identifies levels of cultural recognition, and the role that words play in establishing whether one is on the inside or outside of the lodge wall, and how they help in resolving the possibility that an outsider is actually an insider. An invocation of cultural context and protocol is an engagement, an invitation to cultural participation. But it is also a test, and a warning. The lack of comprehension on the part of the person outside the tipi wall leads to a reaction by the aware protector within—perhaps not a quick or immediate response, but an effective and definitive one. And there is a great and beautiful irony that the approach to such stark definitions and actions is begun and brought about by "normal" discourse[41]: The arrowmaker tells his wife, "Let us talk easily, as of ordinary things." His action of drawing the newly formed arrow and aiming it all around is not cause for alarm for the enemy (until too late), because this action is "as it was right for him to do."[42]

In like manner, the stories and normalized discourses of Indian academics and intellectuals may be obscuring their real intentions, buried under postmodern turns or tribal secrets, or something else not mentioned here. Those intentions, whatever they may be, may very well be justified. Who is to say? (You are.) But I find it interesting and worth remarking on the possibility that agendas may be unwritten between the lines of any told story. And if story is as powerful as I have tried to construct it here, then perhaps the answer to the question, "Who is Indian?," is to be found in the stories Indians tell.

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[41] Kenneth A. Bruffee talks about normal and abnormal discourse in "Collaborative Learning and the 'Conversation of Mankind.'" College English 46 (1984): 635-52; Carl G. Herndl is more helpful in this context, showing how powerful small/daily talk can be, in"Tactics and the Quotidian: Resistance and Professional Discourse" Journal of Advanced Composition 16.3 (1996): 455-470.

[42] Michael Wilson makes this point quite nicely (141-142).

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CHAPTER FOUR
TIES TO THE PAST THAT EFFECT THE FUTURE: AN AMERICAN INDIAN STORY THEME ANALYSIS

In the Spring of 1998, at the oral defense of the specialized portion of my preliminary exam, I participated in a lengthy and stimulating discussion that I felt proved that the paper I had written for the exam (the preceding chapter) did contain some interesting and useful ideas. This boded well for my academic future, both immediate and long term. However, when that same faculty committee continued their critique with a suggestion that I redo the essay, I balked (not a smart thing to do before the exam was actually over). They helped me to see that what I had written was a good SUMMARY and perhaps even an excellent summary synthesis of two leading authors/voices in the American Indian studies field, but what was still required for a dissertation was a fully developed and argued ANALYSIS.

The committee agreed to include in the final dissertation both versions of the text, so that the revision would add to instead of simply replace the earlier essay. They also agreed the prior essay may very well be suitable for a different audience than the one they had in mind (themselves, as graduate faculty in a large English department in a major research institution). They allowed that the AIS discipline would not have the same academic writing mindset that they did and might consider the newness of the ideas I had presented a significant contribution to the AIS discussion of identity. Still, they demanded a theoretical centerpiece for the dissertation, and though I didn't want to hear it at the time, after doing the work to produce the revision, I found them to be right once again about the matter.

Despite the same opening in both pieces, this is a very different essay. I went back to Bormann and reconsidered my position on Story (Fantasy) Theme Analysis. I struggled with the idea of overlaying a Euro-American theoretical model onto Indian issues. I swam in a sea of far too many texts and sources and ideas, and finally focused and focused until the good stuff came out in a semi-coherent fashion. In other words, I wrote an academic essay.

I still have doubts about whether my three themes of place (the land), culture (the oral tradition), and community (the People) are really just too obvious to be named as themes of the overall American Indian story. But I don't have any doubts that Bormann's method provides excellent ideas and terms for framing the identity discussion in American Indian studies, and has good potential to move the debate

from identity politics to a thoughtful and constructive identity discussion. I hope this essay will further that endeavor.

Ties to the Past that Effect the Future: An American Indian Story Theme Analysis

> *If an arrow is well made, it will have tooth marks upon it. That is how you know. The Kiowas made fine arrows and straightened them in their teeth. Then they drew them to the bow to see if they were straight. Once there was a man and his wife. They were alone at night in their tipi. By the light of the fire the man was making arrows. After a while he caught sight of something. There was a small opening in the tipi where two hides were sewn together. Someone was there on the outside, looking in. The man went on with his work, but he said to his wife: "Someone is standing outside. Do not be afraid. Let us talk easily, as of ordinary things." He took up an arrow and straightened it in his teeth; then, as it was right for him to do, he drew it to the bow and took aim, first in this direction and then in that. And all the while he was talking, as if to his wife. But this is how he spoke: "I know that you are there on the outside, for I can feel your eyes upon me. If you are a Kiowa, you will understand what I am saying, and you will speak your name." But there was no answer, and the man went on in the same way, pointing the arrow all around. At last his aim fell upon the place where his enemy stood, and he let go of the string. The arrow went straight to the enemy's heart.*
>
> *N. Scott Momaday* Way to Rainy Mountain *(46)*

What is it about a story that reaches out and grabs us, and holds our attention so closely? I have read the above story many times, have listened to it read aloud, and still, every time, about two-thirds of the way through, my heart starts beating a little faster and I begin to focus in and pay closer attention. And every single time, as I read or hear the last line, I think, that is a great story, or Momaday can really write!

I think one very real power of a narrative is its interpretability, or the potential for an individual to identify with the story and apply the various parts of it to her own life. With a well-told story, one cannot remain distant and objective. Soon questions are raised in a reader/listener's mind: What would it be like if I were in that situation? Who do I visualize myself as—the man, his wife, or the enemy looking in from the outside? If I were the main character, would I be able to maintain such composure, and act with such wisdom and courage? What would it be like to know and use another language in the way this man does, as a secret and coded—and an extremely effective—tool? Some readers may go so far as to attempt to interpret even the smallest details of such a text: What might the arrow signify for me in my own situation?

Or even the teeth marks? What boundaries of inside and outside, signified by the tipi walls, exist in my life? What ironies do I face, like this main character who speaks with stark ordinariness in the context of a life and death situation? And, perhaps the most chilling question of all, who is my enemy?

These questions all come down to one question, what **meaning** does the story I listen to have in my own life? Some theorists argue that there is no meaning outside of this "reader" response. I do not intend to engage in that debate here, but suffice it to say that because we interpret and apply what we hear, stories can have huge impact and influence on our daily lives and the manner in which we perceive our own selves. Stories shape who we are and what we do. According to psychologist Jerome Bruner,

> the ways of telling and the ways of conceptualizing that go with them become so habitual that they finally become recipes for structuring experience itself, for laying down routes into memory, for not only guiding the life narrative up to the present but directing it into the future. (31)

Stories seem like such simple things (in mainstream America, they are often considered to be "innocent" entertainment), but listeners make much of the details that inhere in the stories they listen to, and their choices to tell or to listen to certain stories over others is an action that reveals something about their priorities, and even, according to Bruner, indicates directions they will go in their future decision-making as well. Therefore, a study of the patterns that emerge from the tellings and hearings of told stories can provide important information about the identities of both individuals and groups.

This essay attempts to explore the role that stories play in the process of shaping and constructing identity, in particular, American Indian identity. Identity at its most basic core is about an individual belonging to a social group, about who I stand in relationship to, about the social context in which I find myself situated. One way to define the boundaries that circumscribe those personal and social realities is by telling familiar stories of who is in, who is out, and yes quite often, who is the enemy. It might seem a little silly at first to bring together Indians

and storytelling; after all, storytelling is quintessentially Indian. However, in this essay I place these two side-by-side because I want to explore the connections between the acts of Indian story telling and Indian identity making. Today's Indians are highly concerned with who they are, with who is or is not to be considered part of their company, and their stories reflect those interests and concerns. Issues of belonging and identity drive many of the issues Indian people face and raise themselves in our current age, often creating enough friction along the way to really heat things up.

To accomplish this exploration of the current Indian mindset, I have delved into a set of texts written by Indian people to find the stories of identity written there. The writings of N. Scott Momaday are a good example of texts that over and over show the importance of words to daily life and being. Momaday overtly connected language to Indian identity construction when he argued in Way to Rainy Mountain that "a word has power in and of itself. It comes from nothing into sound and meaning; it gives origin to all things. By means of words can a man deal with the world on equal terms" (33). Momaday discussed Rainy Mountain at the first convocation of American Indian Scholars in 1970, and also there linked the act of speaking to identity creation.

> "Man has consummate being in language, and there only. The state of human *being* is an idea, an idea which man has of himself. Only when he is embodied in an idea, and the idea is realized in language, can man take possession of himself." (56)

Another Indian storyteller, Leslie Marmon Silko, tells one haunting tale of Indian witches whose ultimate magic was an act of narrativizing. In "Long Time Ago," a story set in an age before contact with whites, magicians from all tribes take turns in a one-upmanship of wizardry, and the last contestant tells for his turn a story of the imminent appearance of an uncaring, unfeeling, unseeing, destroying European race. The other witches listen with horror, and finally respond:

> Okay, you win; you take the prize,
> but what you said just now—it isn't so funny....
> Take it back.

But the last magician's reply is indicative of Silko's view of the momentum and efficacy of a story, especially one as true and powerful as this one.

> It's already turned loose.
> It's already coming.
> It can't be called back.
>
> ("Long Time Ago" 137)

This essay will review texts written by Momaday and Silko, and also by other Indian authors, including Ward Churchill, Michael Wilson, Robert Allen Warrior, Ray Young Bear, Kimberly Blaeser, Vine Deloria Jr., Karen Swisher, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, and Gerald Vizenor. The texts I have selected are a cross-section of important documents from the American Indian studies discipline. Most of these selections more directly address issues of Indian identity construction, but I have also included some texts from creative writers, since Indian "fiction" is such an unusually strong force in the knowledge-making practice of the Indian studies field. All of these writers—not just the novelists—tell stories; indeed, we'll find that all participate in tellings of what can be considered a single, Indian story, one which consistently addresses (questions and answers) issues of inclusion and exclusion, of Indian identity.

There are three major sections in this essay. The first explores the connections between story telling and identity construction and establishes a basis for analyzing these Indian texts and authors. For a methodology in this task, I have relied on the theory of rhetorician Ernest Bormann and his Story Theme Analysis. Bormann is not an Indian, but his theory of symbolic convergence provides a compelling narrative framework for discussing the dynamics of identity construction among Indian people. I will highlight relevant aspects of Bormann's theory and method in each of the three sections of the essay, but in short, Bormann's story theme approach reads texts for the dramatistic elements of Setting, Characters, and Actions of those characters within those settings. Close review of these elements in a story reveal patterns—themes—which are consistent across the story and even across the many stories that are told by individuals who belong to a social group. Bormann believes these story themes can be used as indicators of the social construction and maintenance of the group's identity. Themes can be further organized

into even larger patterns[43], resulting in an overall picture of a rhetorical community and its driving rhetorical vision. It is my belief that the discussion of the themes and rhetorical vision of the Indian community can contribute significantly to what has so far been a confusing and frustrating identity discussion in Indian country[44]. In this first section, I will apply Bormann's method to the famous and engaging story of the Arrowmaker that opened this essay as an example of the process I used to conduct my story theme analysis.

The second section of the essay relates the results of the analysis itself. My primary interest is in the American Indian story themes that emerge from American Indian studies texts, in particular, three themes that I believe are found in all the texts and will be found in any Indian telling, since they are essential themes of the modern Indian story. This section discusses at length the importance to Indian people for finding and maintaining a sense of place, a sense of culture, and a sense of community; I draw from specific texts to support my claim that these three themes are endemic to the Indian Story. I also problematize the practice of telling the Indian story, since these themes can be used (indeed are, by some Indian authors) to divide as well as unify the Indian population.

That the contemporary Indian story is now written by Indians themselves is highly significant, and also significant is the manner in which the new story stands in contrast to the old narrative of the American Indian (which was designed to support and sustain the identity and objectives of an entirely separate society—that of mainstream America). My final section will conclude the essay by briefly discussing the overall Indian Story and suggesting how Bormann's conception of a unifying Rhetorical Vision might benefit the pursuits of the Indian

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[43]Bormann calls these gatherings of story themes, story Types; I'll talk more about types and the almost magical cues or "triggers" that can invoke whole stories with merely a word in the second section.

[44]Warrior seeks to avoid a discussion of identity altogether in Tribal Secrets. He states that a "preoccup[ation] with parochial questions of identity and authenticity" have managed only to "reduce, constrain, and contain American Indian literature and thought" (xix). It is my hope that the approach I have chosen escapes the trap Warrior worries about, since I believe, like Devon Mihesuah that "despite the controversy, hurt feelings, and possible retaliation these topics are likely to engender, *we must talk about them*." (91).

rhetorical community, in particular, the American Indian studies community. Bormann's terminology provides a unique way for looking at the Indian community as a whole, despite the fact that Indian Country is actually made up of many different cultures and nations. Bormann's story theme analysis allows recognition of those unique cultures while foregrounding factors that unify Indian people based on their shared experiences and objectives. The method of analysis also allows Indian people a perspective of themselves as a body that is quite different from (but also must stand in relationship to) the mainstream society on which they have come to depend in many ways. In particular, to grow a vibrant academic field such as American Indian studies, I suggest that a disciplinary discussion that pays closer attention to the themes of the American Indian Story would be of benefit. Perhaps the very thing we in American Indian studies needs is a fantasy.

Story Telling, Identity, and Story Themes

> *Self is a text about how one is situated with respect to others and toward the world.*
>
> *(Jerome Bruner, Actual Minds, Possible Worlds 130)*

Stories or narratives are gaining greater attention and wider acceptance as a legitimate field of study in the academy. Anthropologist Renato Rosaldo, in Culture and Truth, a ground-breaking volume on social science research and academic reporting practice, is one of the academics demanding a more prestigious place for the narrative critique in the social sciences. Rosaldo raises questions about the audience of a Richard Borshay Lee account of the hunting process of the !Kung San culture of southern Africa. Lee's description of the hunt, in keeping with "the classic norms" of anthropological reporting, is a **composite** account, created from "repeated observations and multiple indigenous reports," resulting in a generalized description of the !Kung San hunt (129). But Rosaldo argues, from his own experience with the Ilongot of the Philippines, that the primary listeners of hunting stories, the hunters themselves, find little use in the composite account.

> Ilongot storytellers and their interlocutors no more need repeat what "everybody" already knows about hunting than a group of avid sports fans need to bore each other by reciting the basic rules of

> the game....composite accounts usually exclude the very qualities that huntsmen most value. (129)

What is prized, Rosaldo says, is not stories of the expected and mundane, but just the opposite, accounts which expound on "the huntsmen's capacity to respond to the unexpected" (129). Ilongot hunters tell each other stories of hunting prowess, and furthermore, they then go into the bush to "seek out experiences that can be told as stories" (129). Rosaldo's claim that "stories significantly shape human conduct" is a primary argument for his conviction that narrative thus "cannot be ignored by social analysis" (130), and this claim is likewise a primary argument for my connecting Indian storying to Indian identity construction.

One point that Rosaldo is making is that the efficacy of a story can be assessed by the reactions of those listening to it, which are indicators of its value in creating, maintaining, and shaping their most basic life happenings and understandings. Similarly, questions of American Indian identity may be addressed by looking at the response listeners make to stories they hear. Ernest Bormann provides a methodology for identifying the real audience of a story and the importance of a story to them by observing the reactions of story listeners. Bormann focuses on the role "communicative symbols" have in the bringing together of disparate ideas and individuals into a unified or **shared** whole. His theory of "symbolic convergence" may very well provide some ways to handle the many questions of American Indian identity and AIS discipline construction.

Bormann found remarkable the symbolic "explosion" that sometimes occurred among the listeners of a story. Studying small groups, Bormann observed that some stories provoked little response from listeners; these listeners have no investment in the group or meaningful relationship with others in the group. But Bormann found that for other listeners,

> some of the dramatizing...caused a greater or lesser symbolic explosion in the form of a chain reaction. As the members shared the fantasy, the tempo of the conversation increased. People grew excited, interrupted one another, laughed, showed emotion, and forgot their self-consciousness. (5)

Bormann concluded that this cumulative response was evidence of a building of a group identity. Of particular interest were stories that were repeated again and again, or rather, repeated story elements that together comprised a group story. Such story tellings play an important role in the construction of a group's self-concept. Stories are used to teach rules and ways to new or potential members as well as to reinforce the group identity among an established membership. Stories also go beyond such direct uses and become predictive; they **cause** (guide or even force) certain choices among group members, **for the good of the shared group self-vision**. In other words, stories are used to replicate themselves, their tellers, and the cultures that they represent.

Bormann's story theme approach looks at the narrative elements of *setting*, *characters*, and *actions* (Foss 123) in a telling or text, seeking patterns in those elements, patterns Bormann calls story **themes**[45]. A story theme is

> the means through which the interpretation [of events] is accomplished in communication. It is a word, phrase, or statement that interprets events in the past, envisions events in the future, or depicts current events that are removed in time and/or space from the actual activities of the group....Themes tell a story that accounts for the group's experience and **that *is* the reality of the participants**. (Foss 123, my boldface)

Themes which are repeated over and over swirl together into a unified whole which Bormann calls the rhetorical vision of a group, and the group that develops such a vision, he names a rhetorical community. I'll describe the actual process of how story themes and rhetorical visions develop when I get to those sections below. The point here is that stories, organized usefully into thematic categories, can be viewed as indicators of the forming cultural reality or mindset of a group.

Bormann's theory of symbolic convergence therefore holds great potential to inform the discussion of any group's identity, including that of American Indians. Startling similarities can be seen between

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[45]"Fantasy" is Bormann's term for the shared story (the Story) of the group. However, due to the baggage the word "fantasy" carries in our society today, I have chosen to use "story" instead of "fantasy" throughout most of this essay.

Bormann's approach and one well known Indian author's description of her own views on the relationship between stories and Indian group identity.

> It's a very intense sort of thing...by recalling these other stories, which are somehow linked to this place or to this person, or to this kind of activity, it begins to put everything into a kind of, not just into a context, but it puts things into proportion...And it begins to link the individual to the rest of the people in a kind of very essential way. So that the same kind of thing that just happened to you last week, well we'll tell you about other people that it happened to...and all of a sudden, you're not alone in what happened.
>
> And you begin to laugh about things that happened. I guess that's another important function in all of this, is helping, enabling the individual to begin to see things, not just as me, alone...but to begin to see one's experiences, one's fate, one's tragedies in terms of not just yourself but everyone else, so that it brings everything, brings everyone closer, and it makes you seem much more like a part of the family or the group, and it all becomes a part of the stories. And the next time something happens, your story is going to be right there with all the others, and so there's this link and it helps the individual right now; it brings the individual in touch with things and people that happened a hundred years ago, and there's sort of a continuity. In other words, in a sense this telling is a creating of a kind of identity for you, so that whatever situation you find yourself in, you know where you are, and you sort of know who you are. It's that whatever you do, you never feel that you are alone, or you never feel at a loss for... You're never lost, you're never lost.
>
> (Leslie Marmon Silko "Storytelling")

Since stories have played so strong a traditional role in the Indian mindset, looking at Indian identity issues through a lens of the stories that Indians are telling may be quite enlightening. How might one dig into an Indian text for evidence of a group identity that is symbolically converging? For a brief example, let's return to the Momaday story of the

Arrowmaker which opened this essay, and see what interpretation of identity may be had by applying Bormann's dramatistic filter of setting, characters and action.

Setting

In the story of the Arrowmaker, the primary setting is the tipi of a Kiowa couple. That is, their home. As we will see, the home comprises a hugely powerful conceptualization in the thinking of Indian people. What we don't know about Kiowas in this story limits our knowledge about the significance of Momaday's brief description of setting: is this a lone tipi, in a remote area? Or is the enemy creeping about inside a larger camp unnoticed, indicating perhaps a wider line of defense that has already been passed? Significantly, however, there is clearly an inside and an outside, defined by the tipi wall. That is, this story is most assuredly about identity, about who *belongs*.

Additionally, there is a minute but important bit more of information provided by the storyteller: there exists in the tipi, "a small opening." Here is a piece of the text that provides a much richer picture and opens possibilities for tensions that drive the plot/actions of the story. In terms of the inside and outside identity dynamic, this opening in the tipi wall is a blurring of what we might presume has been so far a clear cultural line; inside or outside, either one is distinct, but this space where two hides are sewn together (a natural feature, not one created by the enemy) allows the one outside of the tipi a *small opening*, a chance to intrude upon the sanctity of Kiowan home life.

As a metaphor for modern Indian life, this story is fraught with opportunities for those wishing to establish cultural lines of identification, either for the purpose of keeping others (enemies) out, or for the purpose of finding a way in, however partial or voyeuristic such desires might be. There are those who have no desire to **be** Kiowa or some other specific tribal and cultural person—they would be unwilling to invest the time and commitment such an identity transformation would demand, were it even possible—but who do want to peek, and perhaps even to obtain if they can some interesting or valuable cultural artifact for themselves. There have always been such people, and they have always been the enemy of home-dwellers.

It is these perpetrators and invaders of traditional cultural boundary (outsiders who pretend to be insiders) who most often are mentioned in the contemporary Indian identity debate. Considering the cultural loss of the last century or two especially, an important question comes to mind: WHO has sufficient knowledge to make the determination that a supposed insider is actually a fake, an outsider, an enemy? Many Indians seem willing to volunteer for this role, but what mechanisms exist for establishing **their** authority or insidedness? In an intertribal Indian societal context, the answer to this question (a legitimate and important one) is extremely difficult to find; the answer tends more often toward Noone than Anyone, and more often than not, the question's pursuers simply throw up their hands in frustration and give up trying to answer it. It is worth saying that this gray area is the primary site of identity tension in Indian country; the issue is not going away, and it shows the importance of the setting element in the telling of the Indian story overall.

Characters

At first glance, there are three characters in this story: the Arrowmaker, his wife, the enemy. But careful scrutiny reveals that neither the wife nor the enemy have either dialogue or action in this drama, and it becomes safe to conclude that they are more a part of the context of the story (that is, they are aspects of setting[46]) rather than independent characters themselves. This is not to say they are unimportant. The presence of the wife provides the listener with a sense of the responsibility and real urgency that must fall to the lot of the Arrowmaker when he realizes the sanctity of his home is already violated by the revealed presence of the enemy. However, this story at its most basic level has a single character, the Arrowmaker himself. Momaday's story is really about this one individual, his perception of a situation in which he finds himself, and how he decides to handle it.

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[46]Overlap between elements (e.g., is the Arrowmaker's vocation a part of his setting or a feature of his character?) points out limitations in Bormann's model for analysis. Kenneth Burke's pentadic approach provides additional elements (a total of five, including act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose) and Burke's ratios concentrates on identifying which feature in a set of features is the most dominant (Grammar of Motives). But, for reasons too cumbersome to mention here, I am not doing a pentadic analysis, and we'll more simply stick with the three elements Bormann provides.

The Arrowmaker character is an Indian man; he is Kiowa. He shows this by manifesting cultural skills, an enactment of knowledge and ability that has most likely passed out of existence in the storyteller's (Momaday's) age. Nevertheless, the telltale teeth marks on the arrow he produces are widely acknowledged evidence of its quality and could even be used as cultural and individual craftmaker identifiers. The storyteller declares authoritatively upon the genuineness of the Arrowmaker's performance of his trade: "that is how you **know**."

There are other features that provide a perspective of this character's being and that add helpful insights regarding his handling of the situation in which we find him. He is alone with his wife in the tipi. It is night, a favorite time for enemies to roam. However, the Arrowmaker is observant—he (not the wife) catches sight of something outside. And he is composed as he deals with this anomaly, which begins with ambiguity but soon resolves itself into a life-threatening situation. He is also clever, and quickly devises a way to find out what he needs to know in order to act. The Arrowmaker also speaks the Kiowa language. This is perhaps a simple thing, possibly something he himself takes for granted. But in our contemporary existence, where it is rare to find an Indian who knows his native tongue better than English, this facet of the Arrowmaker grows in importance. Even the story stresses this fact, since it is a knowledge of the language that is invoked by the Arrowmaker as the ticket in or permanently out for the individual outside the tipi. Finally, the Arrowmaker is not only clever, but strong. He is able to abide, and in the final scene, he does not hesitate to follow through on his decision to act.

In our own modern existence, the described character of the Arrowmaker provides opportunity for hearers to compare ourselves to him and to determine through this comparison how we might conduct ourselves in his situation. It is a chance for the Indians among us to assess how legitimate we are, how securely settled into the cultural environment this story at least partially describes. Or perhaps the story gives listeners space to characterize ourselves as the enemy without the lodge, and maybe even to surmise alternative explanations to the conclusion which the Arrowmaker ultimately reaches; to second guess

him. In any case, the story provides, through the person of the Arrowmaker as Momaday tells him, some kind of a standard against which to measure whether and how an individual belongs or does not belong. The characteristics of the Arrowmaker, at least within the frame of this story's telling, define for us what it is to be an Indian.

Actions

Very possibly the most defining characteristics of Indian identity are revealed in the actions found in this story. Setting and/or character, if either are static, form little more than an interesting background picture, perhaps because of its cultural aspects one that is novel to a non-Indian listener or affirming to an Indian hearer. But when the character begins to move within the context of his situation, when he realizes a familiar setting has turned into an unfamiliar and threatening one, then his actions reveal aspects of what it means to be Kiowa, to be Indian.

There are normalizing activities performed by the Arrowmaker, motions which culturally stabilize his existence. He makes a living by shaping arrows, he spends quiet evenings with his wife in their home, he converses in Kiowa. But this particular evening, this average Kiowa man is quickened into something more. He notices an anomaly, something out of place. The actions of Momaday's Arrowmaker character paint a new, live picture of the American Indian, one that breaks stereotypes of sullenness, drunken stupor, helplessness, unreasonable savagery. The Arrowmaker catches sight of something. He quickly identifies characteristics of that something that lead to an understanding the "something" is a potential threat, and he just as quickly devises a plan that will determine the extent of that danger.

At this point in the story, the choices the Arrowmaker makes become quite interesting to the research I have conducted, because the Arrowmaker **uses language** to carry out this determination. He uses *normal discourse* [47] as a rhetorical strategy: "let us talk easily, as of ordinary things," is the first thing he says to his wife. We can rest assured she understood him, that things were in actuality just the opposite of

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[47]Kenneth Bruffee is probably the most familiar discussion in rhetoric circles of "normal" vs. "abnormal" discourse. Carl Herndl writes of the use of the quotidian, or small bits of normal discourse, to achieve change within organizations. Bormann's discussion of cueing or triggers may have relevance here.

ordinary. "All the while he was talking," as far as any outside observer could tell, it was "as if to his wife." Normalcy is also a part of his strategy later on, as he draws and points the arrow "as it was right for him to do," preventing suspicion in the enemy until too late. The cleverness of the Arrowmaker is a strategy not only of the character in the story but also of the storyteller; it is a characteristic that engages Momaday's readers, gains their admiration. Admirable, too, is the Arrowmaker's ultimate willingness to follow through on the knowledge he has gained; the poignancy of the arrow flying "straight to the enemy's heart" provides a sharp conclusion to the story.

The words of the Arrowmaker also inform the modern Indian activity of determining the identity of others. His opening address is an *invitation* to the person outside the tipi to acknowledge their presence and to be identified as one who does rightfully belong to be standing there. The Arrowmaker begins positive, congenial; he initially gives benefit of doubt. This is a normal Indian reaction to others: a mix of the politeness culture requires and of suspicion. Indians, when they meet, usually first listen (or even ask) for information about a person's family, who they know, those sort of things. When some piece of information coincides with their own knowledge, only then something clicks inside their mind, "yes, you are Indian." I'm not commenting here on whether such decisioning is "right" or "wrong" (a brief look at history certainly justifies the modern Indian tendency toward skepticism and cynicism when approached by strangers claiming to have Indian heritage), but wish to note the existence of the identifying act as common Indian practice. And this is not a solely Indian phenomenon. Every group has its cultural criteria, and in a new situation, those criteria are first marched out to establish a bearing or standard for reading that situation. And private language is a tried and true way of enabling insiders and disadvantaging outsiders—that is, to establish the boundaries of group identity.

Story Themes in the Modern Indian Story

> *Don't go away, don't isolate yourself, but* ***come here****, because we have all had these experiences together"—****this is what the people are saying*** *to you when they tell you those other stories.* *(Leslie Marmon Silko, "Language," 59)*

Over the course of the research that led up to this essay, I conducted a story theme analysis on texts in the academic discipline of American Indian Studies. Indian studies is the site of many Indian identity discussions and controversies, and is particularly helpful to my study because it provided so many texts (and therefore stories) to analyze. I read widely in Indian studies, looking for dramatistic elements that might be repeated stories. I finally narrowed my focus to a comparison of texts written by what I saw as two competing voices in the field, postmodernist Gerald Vizenor and tribalist Elizabeth Cook-Lynn[48]. But in reading many other texts as well there surfaced—and resurfaced—three essential threads that I came to identify as endemic to the American Indian story being told today.

Bormann argues that "the scholar's main task in making a fantasy theme analysis is to find evidence that...groups of people have shared a fantasy" (6) by finding and drawing attention to recurring and therefore reinforcing stories found in the texts studied. A look at setting, characters and actions can provide solid narrative data from any text or set of texts, patterns or **themes** which provide insight into the overriding story. Themes that are repeated often enough, says Bormann, and which become so familiar to the participants of a group that they become "stock scenarios" or "archetypal dramas" (7), have tremendous power to not merely represent a formulated group mindset, but actually direct and dictate that mindset, **re**formulating it over and over again in the attitudes of the group's membership. This is an important and powerful conception of narrative, since stories cease at this point to be merely a product of group identity and become themselves producers of it.

Bormann offers several evidences that this process occurs, and perhaps the most persuasive is the huge power that inheres in small pieces of texts that he calls cues or **triggers**. Triggers are "cryptic allusions to symbolic common ground" (6), single words and catch

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[48]See previous chapter.

phrases that, when invoked, cause in a hearer's mind a bifurcation of entire stories or themes. Bormann claims that the LACK of specificity provided by triggers allows (requires) the hearer to fill in details of the story from their own personal experience, making it all the more real for them (6-8)[49]. Examples of triggers in Indian literature include positive and negative personages (such as Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull...or George Custer), and historical places and events (such as Wounded Knee and Sand Creek). Indian story triggers also include contemporary buzzwords, such as tribal and sovereignty. Bormann's theory helps explain what is happening among Indian people when these words or phrases are invoked, and also how stereotypical images of Indians (such as heathen redskin or, an equally damaging antithesis, noble savage) can remain so stubbornly tenacious in our modern society. Later in this essay, I wish to contrast two such overarching views or Stories of the American Indian in our modern day, but the point I want to make here is that seemingly simple, single words or phrases (triggers) can cue an entire set of responses and memories (stories) that lead, with little direct effort of their own, to the reinforcement of an entire group mindset or world view (identity). As we look at the texts of my analysis, I ask that the reader look both for themes and triggers of a larger American Indian story.

In the American Indian studies texts, I found at least three themes that occurred and recurred which revolve around American Indian identity issues. Identity asks questions like what is an Indian like, where will he be found, who will he be found with, what kinds of things will he be found doing. These who/what/where questions parallel quite nicely Bormann's dramatistic elements, foregrounding stories that work to define the appropriate settings, character, and actions of any Indian—to the satisfaction of other Indians, of course. The three themes I found in the Indian studies texts are a sense of Place, a sense of Culture, and a sense of Community. These three are reasons for being Indian, as well as something/someone **to be loyal to**—the land, the oral tradition, each other. In addition to accurately reflecting Indian culture, the three

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[49]See also his discussion of coherency on page 10. Bennett and Edelman develop this phenomenon in even more depth in their excellent essay on the political power of narrative. See especially the discussion of "pregnant references" on pages 164-165.

themes also function as criteria for assessing the Indianness of another person. That is to say, any writer or storyteller's handling of these themes will be used as validators of their Indian identity, and therefore their authenticity to speak for Indian people at all. I find that every Indian writer invokes these themes at various times and to varying degrees. My claim here is that **any Indian writing must reflect and be driven by a sense of Indian place, a sense of Indian culture, and a sense of Indian community**. To be identified as Indian, a storyteller must be seen to be standing in the land, sitting at the feet of knowledge, and walking continually with the people.

Stand in the Land

A sense of PLACE provides Indian people with ownership, pride, and history (hiSTORY)—the Indian, having suffered great loss in Indian/White relations, is nevertheless not entirely displaced and bereft of natural resources in the modern age, and with proper and careful relationship to the land, Indian people have a solid PLACE from which to begin new efforts to build, to remain, to <u>be</u> Indian.

There has been much written about the differences in the ways that Indians and westerners perceive the land and their relationship to it. The words of early and eloquent Indian speakers, such as the following words of Tecumseh, are sometimes cited to establish that a "true" Indian philosophy precludes "owning" the land: "Sell a country! Why not sell the air, the clouds, and the great sea, as well as the earth? Did not the Great Spirit make them all for the use of his children?" (500 Nations 311). While it may be true the Indian mindset more often than not differs from that of non-Indians by placing humans beside rather than over nature, and therefore requires a more careful relationship than most white people envision, I don't think it's true that Indians do not harbor a sense of possession of the land, a territorialism based on prior occupancy. Historical figures in Indian-White relations also spoke possessively of the land. Satanta said, "I love the land and the buffalo, and will not part with it....This is our country. We have always lived in it. We always had plenty to eat because the land was full of buffalo. We were happy....Then you came....We have to protect ourselves. We have to save our country. We have to fight for what is ours" (372). And Sitting Bull voiced

straightforwardly, "The Black Hills belong to me. If the whites try to take them, I will fight" (398).

This historical example of a protective Indian attitude is drawn upon by modern Indian activists. Ward Churchill, for example, believes "that the land rights of 'First Americans' should serve as a first priority for everyone seriously committed to accomplishing positive change in North America" (Native Son 521), and that "the beginning point for any indigenist endeavor in the United States centers...in efforts to restore direct Indian control over the huge portion of the continental United States that was plainly never ceded by native nations" (519). One of the most powerful and driving terms of the day for Indians, sovereignty, seems to center (at least for now) around legal battles over the land.

Momaday argues that it is a personal relationship, like the kind you might have with a friend, that best describes the essential Indian perception of the land.

> The Indian conceives of himself in terms of the land. His imagination of himself is also and at once an imagination of the physical world from which he proceeds and to which he returns in the journey of his life....The earth is sacred, then....It is a living entity, in which living entities have origin and destiny. The Indian does not lose sight of it, ever; he is bound to the earth forever in his spirit. To the non-Indian this may seem an extraordinary perception, but to the Indian it is altogether ordinary, appropriate, natural in the best sense; that is, it is in keeping with humane conduct, worthy of man in the full expression of his humanity. By means of his involvement in the natural world does the Indian insure his own well being.
>
> (National Geographic World 23)

Land is also envisioned by Indian people as a home, a place to return to. Returning home is a constant theme of major fiction by Indian authors. McNickle's Archilde, Momaday's Abel, Silko's Tayo, Welch's unnamed protagonist in Winter In The Blood, all return home from the outside (white) world for rediscovery, reconnection, and healing[50].

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[50]David M. Craig characterizes the fiction of James Welch as consisting "of estrangement, of search for self, and of return to the Indian world" (183). Louis Owens

Michael Wilson believes that home comprises "the idea of the Center in some contemporary American Indian writing" (129). Wilson's goal in "Speaking of Home" is to show that Indian identity is ever both unified and changing continually. At one point, he almost sounds like Bormann in describing the stabilizing influence of place:

> In a storytelling culture, [a] "unitary language" exists for an entire group, where a stable center of value is created through the concerted efforts of speakers and listeners over time, sometimes millennia....The pulling together of people and stories to a specific area shows the fundamental importance of place or space in which this dynamic occurs. (136)

Robert Allen Warrior shows the centrality of land in the Indian story by devoting a major section of Tribal Secrets to a discussion of "The Violation of Sovereign Land and Community in Deloria and Mathews." John Joseph Mathews and Vine Deloria Jr. are "two American Indian intellectuals" of this century (xiii), whose writings help Warrior argue that a lengthy written literary tradition already exists from which to conduct a distinctly Indian critique. From these writers, Warrior concludes that two "necessary starting points for the process of coming to a deep perception of the conflicts and challenges that face American Indian people" are "land and community" (85).

Mathews in particular, Warrior writes, dedicated himself for several years to the observation of a particular landscape (the Blackjacks of the Osage country of Oklahoma), and from this experience developed an "organic" scientific perspective, a theoretical stance in which the "land itself [becomes] an agent in the process [of interpretation and expression]" (62). Within such an overpowering earth-orientation, alternative scientific and academic methods are needed by Indian intellectuals, because standard (mainstream) research assumptions and approaches are inadequate to an Indian critique. Warrior supports this claim by citing Mathews' own description of the difficulties he faced in writing and publishing his book, Talking To The Moon:

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remarks that "Craig's 'three part story' fits the general pattern of American Indian novels rather neatly" (Owens 267).

> I was thwarted...by my own informality and defeated through my own inability to reason with those who had formal training. I could not begin with the upper branches of a tree and follow one to the trunk, but must go to the roots, and beyond the roots to the reasons for nature's encouragement of the seedling. (63)

Mathews' holistic and inductive perspective extends for Warrior and for contemporary Indian thinkers into an entire research process and practice methodology, one that is exactly "the inverse of a method of interpretation that first comes of with an overarching scheme and then fits data into that scheme" (64). In particular, Warrior sees Mathews challenging a European mindset that too easily and quickly separates natural life processes from their human *ornamentation*, or thought and discussion about those processes.

Place is an abiding identity theme since the longer an individual or group have been in a particular geographical location, the more and more activities occur that are shared as stories that come to produce the group identity. This is very true for Indians. Stories grow out of places; they are experiences that have happened somewhere, and the where stands as a quick trigger for the memory. Silko says,

> If you really listen closely, when someone is talking about something that happened two weekends ago...very quickly other stories, either similar stories that occurred in other places, or incidents that occurred in that same place [are told]. In other words, whenever a place, or a family, or a kind of activity, whenever something like that is related, at the same time all of these other kinds of stories are remembered. (Video)

The concrete nature of place makes it more obvious, easy to visualize than other, more abstract "spaces" (e.g., intellectual arguments about rights), which is a partial explanation for the land being an effective and powerful communication tool for the Indian identity. Where an Indian person stands physically has long been a clear reflection of where they stand in emotion and intent, where their priorities are at. Being home is not subtle. A pledge of dedication from a distance may be doubted, but physical presence is a powerful way (at least for Indians) to prove you

care—that I came, that I stayed, that I'm still here, these facts **show** how important you and this place are in my life.

So is it an Indian story? To find out, look where the person is standing when they are speaking—where they are telling it from. An Indian cannot live without (both meanings intended) Indian country, or at the very least finds it necessary to carry pieces of place with her wherever she goes and to participate in regular pilgrimages home to recharge that which makes her an Indian. Schools often do not understand the draw of home for the Indian student. When a family member passes, when someone takes sick, or even just when loneliness sets in, the Indian student simply slips away and goes home.

Sit at the feet of knowledge

A sense of CULTURE[51] provides Indian deciders preset parameters for determining inclusion and exclusion—the possession and promotion of Indian language and culture comprise an intellectual heritage that may be called on to endorse and authenticate.

If the land is the WHERE that Indians are returning to, then culture is the WHAT. Tradition acts as a needed standard for Indian decision making, and the stories have never been more important than they are now, since they act as anchors for Indian cultures set in modern contexts. Indians look to the past, and compare it to the present in order to assess Indianness. However, the distance between the past and the present—and also the chasm of silence that was allowed to grow between them—make for some confusion in contemporary Indian determinations of identity. Indians seek the past as precedent, but if that knowledge base is unreliable, then decisioning becomes untenable as well. Nevertheless, there do remain strong pockets of tradition and culture, and Indian country pays special attention to the care and preservation of these precious resources. There is something of a sigh of relief among Indians today, since in many cases that cultural remnant was almost lost. Warrior

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[51] I have used several terms throughout this essay in more than one way, including story, community, and this one, culture. I hope that the context in each case helps the reader to determine my intended meaning. I have mentioned general and multiple Indian "cultures," but here refer to the intellectual and historical knowledge base that plays such a huge role in the Indian identity.

articulates an important and sad difference between John Joseph Mathews' era and our own:

> Talking To The Moon....is imbued throughout with a largely accurate, tragic sense that in only a few years most of these things, too, except the blackjacks, will pass into memory. Less than a half-century after its writing, many of the animals that were common in Mathews's time are rare or nonexistent sights. Now, rather than the eldest Osages being able to remember the last buffalo hunts, the move to the reservation, and the ceremonial system, the eldest are the last to remember those who remembered these things. (58)

But if cultural knowledge is not first hand any more, not a result of direct experience, it is still able to be taught (retaught) by the telling of stories, and the elders of an Indian tribe or community are recognized as essential for that practice and hugely valued because of it. Elders provide knowledge and information, to a new generation that is perhaps more ready to listen and to learn.

Facets of cultural knowledge that are used to determine identity include the kinds of things elders have: the ability to speak one's native language, an in-depth knowledge of a nation's own experiences (their history and oral tradition), and aspects of religious and social thought credibly translated into practice.

One prominent Indian writer, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, praises the work of Ray Young Bear, a contemporary native writer, in part because he uses his Meskwaki language throughout his texts. She says, of Young Bear's first novel, Black Eagle Child: "Occasionally, but not often, I review a book that I consider flawless. This was one of those occasions" (17). The Meskwaki tongue is important in Young Bear's work; indeed it is difficult to imagine a Young Bear story without Meskwaki dialogue. Young Bear identifies himself as a word collector, and boldly claims that Indians who cannot speak their native language cannot authentically represent themselves as Indian writers. Although Young Bear believes that true Indian cultural activities and understandings must be tightly tied to the land or homeplace of a nation, other Indian writers believe many of these cultural aspects transport and translate into the new, intertribal and untribal locations and situations in which Indians find themselves.

Nevertheless, the greater the distance of an person from place and community, the greater the strain on the credibility of his or her cultural claim.

Another manifestation of cultural knowledge which has a huge impact on Indian identity assessment has to do with an individual's sophisticated understanding of traditional ways. This is a powerful validation method for Indians often because such ways simply cannot be learned in a library or any other research institution; they are manners of thought that have been and still are passed down only orally. Kimberly Blaeser has written a book recently about Ojibwe author Gerald Vizenor, the subtitle of which states her overall purpose: to argue that Vizenor is indeed "writing in the oral tradition." It may not be readily apparent, but Blaeser's claim is a response to charges from other Indian authors that Vizenor's extensive corpus does not really belong to or reflect "real" Indian thought. In other words, some Indian authors would like to write Vizenor **outside** of the cultural line. For example, one tribal writer, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, puts Vizenor at the head of a list of mixed-blood writers who are "failed intellectuals" because they offer "few useful expressions of resistance and opposition to the colonial history at the core of Indian/White relations" and instead "explicit[ly] accommodat[e] the colonialism of the 'West'" ("Intellectualism" 70 and 67). I'll explore more deeply the differences between Cook-Lynn's tribal voice and Vizenor's postindian one in the next section on community, but the point I wish to make here is that Blaeser's entire book is an appeal to the cultural facet of the Indian identity story. She recognizes the importance and persuasive power of the oral tradition, and is, in effect, saying to those who would question Vizenor's identity, You see, he IS Indian, as shown by his longtime and consistent participation in the Story. This, Blaeser argues, despite departures in his work from more familiar Indian ways and thought.

> The Anishinaabeg had an oral tradition, [and] Vizenor works in a written medium. The Anishinaabeg spoke Anishinaabemowin, while Vizenor writes in English, employing words or phrases from the tribal language now and then. The Anishinaabeg were a woodland people, but Vizenor has spent more than half his life in

> metropolitan areas. The list of contrasts goes on. But despite these disjunctures, the work of mixedblood writer Gerald Vizenor seeks and achieves a tribal connection. (199)

Vizenor is not alone among Indians (even among Indian writers) in his modern circumstances that have distanced him from Indian place, and Blaeser is wisely appealing to the huge number of Indians who have found themselves, for whatever reason, away from home. She emphasizes throughout the book facets of Vizenor's writing that show him still firmly attached to the oral tradition, even if it is more an "internal rather than external tribal connection" (200). Vizenor's work, Blaeser argues, is much like that of other native writers which always find a way to "maintain an immutable image of **place** and **community**. The survival of the various characters stems from their connections to these two core elements" (200, my emphasis). Blaeser never shies away from the facts of Vizenor's distance from home, nor of his very untraditional postmodern philosophy and style. Instead, Blaeser emphasizes these facets of Vizenor as a partial explanation for some of the amazing directions that he has taken in his texts. However, Blaeser's claim is that an Indian doesn't have to live physically on the reservation, as long as they remain rooted in, respectful of, and connected to Indian culture. And, as far as Blaeser is concerned, Vizenor does pass this identity test; he is writing in the oral tradition.

Cultural knowledge, as an intellectual heritage and Indian identity marker, also demands commitment to a comprehensive world view, not just head knowledge or lip service. And the possession of such a world view would need to be evidenced in practice as well as understanding. Vine Deloria Jr.'s most recent book, Red Earth, White Lies, stands out in its appeal for the academy's acceptance of an Indian approach to knowledge-making OVER (that is, in place of) traditional mainstream's science-driven perspective. Deloria softens no edges in his critique of the academy and its research process. He sees little difference between the scientific "facts" widely forwarded by American academics and the so-called "myths" of non-Western cultures and mindsets which those same academics disparage; Deloria argues that both are simply belief systems, and that the former is only privileged because it was the first to seize

(and since then to carefully protect) a monopoly on the intellectual market.

> In our society we have been trained to believe that scientists search for, examine, and articulate truths about the natural world and about ourselves. They don't. But they do search for, take captive, and protect the social and economic status of scientists. As many lies are told to protect scientific doctrine as were ever told to protect "the church" (17-18).

However, Deloria is not nearly as sanguine as most of American society about science's reliability, and he argues against blindly accepting its offerings. Red Earth, White Lies is a direct challenge to the authority of the western scientific stronghold.

In regard to any alternative or conflicting knowledge systems, Deloria charges that western science only "accepts non-Western traditions to the degree to which they help to bolster the existing and approved orthodox doctrines" (47). However, it is Deloria's purpose to establish an arena of respect and voice for world views and insights that offer other accounts of reality than the one which has been so narrowly told by Western science. He says that there is a "major difference between American Indian views of the physical world and Western science," the conviction that Indians have that "the world in which we live is alive" (55). Deloria sees great strength in this very Indian and non-western point of view, and very possibly some answers to many of the problems that plague our modern society. But he doubts the research community will ever do any respectful listening. According to Deloria, two things would need to occur for a healthy exchange of views to take place between Indians and Western science.

> First, corrective measures must be taken to eliminate scientific misconceptions about Indians, their culture, and their past. Second, there needs to be a way that Indian traditions can contribute to the understanding of scientific beliefs at enough specific points so that the Indian traditions will be taken seriously as valid bodies of knowledge. Both changes involve a fundamental struggle over the question of authority, since even when Indian ideas are demonstrated to be correct there is the racist propensity

> to argue that the Indian understanding was just an ad hoc lucky guess—which is perilously close to what now passes for scientific knowledge. (60)

If Indian ways of thinking do find voice and validity in the academy today, Deloria wants Indians to know, research practice will need to reflect those very basic epistemological differences. At the very least, Indian academics can be considering changes or challenges that they need to make as they pursue higher degrees and participate in multiple communities. In any case, Deloria's argument about discursive authority is based on an appeal to traditional knowledge, and he offers Indian people a new perspective that radically challenges common assumptions and seeks to draw new (or perhaps old) identity boundaries based on tribal understandings. Deloria's voice is perhaps extreme in its boldness, but it is not unusual since a firm sense of culture is an essential theme of the American Indian story.

Is it an Indian story? Look for references to authentic participation in cultural understanding and world view. Who and what (and how much of both) one knows about the history and heritage from which they claim to have grown are important criteria for establishing native identity. After all, how can someone be Indian if they know nothing of their past? An Indian cannot be Indian and not speak the language (that is, skillfully use terms that other Indians recognize as their own). Ward Churchill believes that many who call themselves Indians really "have no genuine sense of who or what they are" (Native Son 510). Churchill continues:

> By not looking at where they've come from, they cannot know where they're going, or where it is they should go. It follows that they cannot understand what it is they are to do, how to do it, or why. In their confusion, they identify with the wrong people, the wrong things, the wrong tradition. They therefore inevitably pursue the wrong goals and objectives, putting last things first and often forgetting the first things altogether, perpetuating the very structures of oppression and degradation they think they oppose. (Native Son 510)

However, in the face of huge loss of oral tradition, combined with an intrusive mainstream research practice that has for centuries

recorded and shelved such information, bits and pieces of cultural knowledge **can** be learned and can also, to a certain extent, be faked (i.e., by non-Indians). Especially in intertribal situations or places such as urban Indian communities, where the cultural base is mixed and limited, tribal knowledge is difficult to authenticate, and therefore problems arise when Indians seek to use it in identity definition. Cultural knowledge must thus remain in the greater context of the overall Indian story, and Indians will continue to check claims of Indian identity with connections to the home place and also an individual's relationship to the Indian COMMUNITY.

Walk with the People

A sense of COMMUNITY provides camaraderie and collaboration—an Indian need not determine or defend strictly on their own knowledge or opinion; identity is ever a shared and linked activity.

When historically separated from original **lands** and legally barred from participation in **culture** (e.g., potlatch, ghost dance), Indian people maintained and still carefully preserve a commitment and loyalty to each other. This is especially true with others of the same tribe (that is, those with a shared immediate story—place, language, culture, family, band, etc.), but Indians have extended this view of relationships intertribally, particularly in times of great tribal loss such as that seen in this nation's governmental institution of the policies of removal, relocation, and termination. Intertribal communities, found often in urban settings, where Indians have been dislocated from their home cultures and communities, are examples of the Indian community extended beyond strict tribal lines.

Indian views on family relationships show important differences from mainstream perspectives on community. In Indian country, there is much less precision in gauging generations or hierarchies of familial connections. There are no cousins (and certainly no use for a designation like second-cousin-twice-removed) and no "greats"—a great-grandfather is simply a grandfather. An Indian's uncle or auntie can easily be someone other than solely the sibling of a parent. The act of adoption is somehow more absolute among Indians and carries less pejorative connotations than in the mainstream society. This strong perspective of family

provides great continuity for Indian communities. Louise Erdrich's novels of the Kashpaw and Lamartine families, for example, reflect this phenomenon. Love Medicine and Erdrich's other books roam all over the country and the time line, with seemingly little regard or need for the unity normally provided by sequencing in fiction. However, it is the connections between families—their community relationships—that provide the tight frame for the stories Erdrich tells (and it is family ties that produce much of the friction as well, since that is always an integral flip-side of kinship).

In the modern day, reservation communities are the main source of that sense of kinship and unity for Indians, and one's connection to the folks back home is ever a criteria for establishing a claim of Indianness. Upon meeting, Indians visibly relax when the answer to their question of, "Where are you from?" produces a name they are familiar with. Community membership is by invitation and acknowledgment of others (already in the community) rather than self-selection and is therefore more difficult for pretenders than the more obscure or specialized avenues possible in cultural understanding. Local communities make for direct and quick recognition of belonging or not, of being an insider or outsider. Yet even in urban and intertribal situations, where the criteria of knowing someone personally is impossible, community can be and is used to determine the boundaries of Indian group identity. Community is grown in the common experience of Indian people from many different backgrounds and with a wide variety of geographical origin—the historical and current treatment SHARED by all the tribes makes them, on some level, a single community. Somehow, the same stories are told, wherever in Indian country an Indian finds himself; the small changes in telling are only dialectical differences of the same Indian language. Powwows are perhaps the clearest evidence or recurring instantiation of this national, all-Indian community. Often powwows take place on reservation lands, but even when they do not, the dancers' and observers' participation in the intertribal culture signifies and binds Indian people together into a tight knit group.

In the academy, the need for Indians to take care of other Indians and of Indian business is a community responsibility that is taken very

seriously. Much like the Indian agency that was commandeered by federal governmental offices in the past, American Indian studies programs in higher education are felt by Indians to have been dominated too long by non-Indian educators, and Indian academics now seek to change the disproportionate ratio of Indian instructors to Indian instruction (which would include both the teaching OF Indian students and ABOUT Indian people). The need for Indians to take a more prominent role in Indian studies and Indian education takes various forms. Some of the voices on this issue are more radical, desiring to overturn the existing status quo, and some seek more subtle ways to change the academic system from the inside out.

One Indian author, educator Karen Swisher, makes a none-too-subtle appeal to the story theme of community when she argues that "Indian people should be given more authority in writing about Indian education" (83). A major reason she gives for this position is the desirability of Indian self-determination, the need for Indians to have sovereign control over their own affairs instead of remaining subjected to oversight by entities outside of the community. Indian authorship would also provide greater authenticity in the texts that are produced, Swisher believes. She acknowledges progress in recent academic practice, but for Swisher, community lines still establish boundaries for authority of voice and even of basic comprehension of Indian people and ways. Swisher notes that improvements have been made in the ways that academic fields (such as anthropology and history, who have not always been sensitive to Indian insight) work with Indian knowledge.

> Among the current methods being used to attempt to capture authenticity are: Listening to the voices of the people and making sure they are heard through the writing; telling the stories of the people as metaphors and examples of schooling experiences; and presenting the perspectives of others in an attempt to encourage readers to see through a different lens. (83)

But in the end, Swisher asks, "How can an outsider really understand life on reservations, the struggle for recognition, sovereignty, economic development, preservation of language and culture?" (86). Swisher does not claim non-Indians should <u>not</u> write about Indians, only that there are

different opportunities available to Indians that are not possible for non-Indians.

> Much of what has been written is historically accurate and not harmful or offensive; it is sensitively, and in some cases beautifully, done. What is missing is the passion from within and the authority to ask new and different questions based on histories and experiences as indigenous people. (85)

As insiders of the Indian community, Indians simply have access to separate and additional information.

Swisher puts the main burden of responsibility for action and change on the shoulders of Indian academics. She does suggest that non-Indian educators who are interested in seeing Indians empowered might "now demonstrate that belief by stepping aside" (85), but Swisher's article is largely a charge to Indian academic professionals to accept responsibility for defining themselves what is best for Indians in Indian education (88). Swisher reveals a pattern among Indian academics that helps explain, at least in part, why Indians have not written and published more in the past, and

> It is difficult to take a selfish stance and say no in the university experience when it means an Indian presence or perspective will not be included. My Indian colleagues and I feel a strong sense of commitment and the urgency to *do* something for our people overpowers the desire and time it takes to write. (87)

It is worth noting that this reason is largely an attention to community (that is, attention to the Indian community at the expense of participation in the standard practices of the academic community).

Another example of community as an identifying theme will also be the final set of texts in this analysis. I'd like to return to the question of whether and how certain Indians are to be assessed as either in or out of the Indian community. In light of the long history of Indian cultural and intellectual (as well as physical) resources expropriation, it should be expected that a significant amount of the discussion among Indian academics these days revolves around who is best able and suited to conduct research and to write about Indians. Swisher's article is only the beginning of talk on this issue, and I have hoped all along that this essay

would constructively contribute to that discussion as well, but there are others who take a much harder stance on the issue, asking (and even deciding) in their texts who should be **allowed** to research and write on Indians. These determinations are made often along borders of racial identity and the authors warrant their claims with the Indian story themes I have outlined in this essay. But it seems to me that something is happening here that is very different from building the rhetorical community of Indians as a whole, and I wonder about the possibility of other communities, with their own purposes, being at work in the Indian academic community. There arises in this volatile milieu, a tremendously interesting and relevant question: Can appeals to the Indian Story sometimes contradict and **work against** the very identity that story is striving to construct?

A problem faced by Indian people is the juxtaposition of both the desire for Indian unity and the fact of cultural difference. In other words, there are multiple social groups, and many Indians are not satisfied to choose only one OR the other. But what if one cultural group or a group with a particular agenda seeks to exert influence on other groups or the Indian community as a whole? Competing stories, therefore, may preclude finding a comfortable position when each of the (sub)cultures is vying for the preservation of its own interests, as Bormann's theory has led us to believe occurs. An example that shows that such a competition among Indians actually happens is this: In almost every contemporary social situation, Indian people work in close contact with native people of another tribal entity. When Indians find a level of group membership or intertribal identity in, say, their work place, what happens when an individual from home intrudes on that setting, demanding participation in the stories that are told there? Even more drastic, what if members of an Indian group are **split** in their opinion about whether an individual newly introduced to their situation is or is not Indian at all? Perhaps the latecomer is of mixed Indian blood and/or is experientially removed from their traditional tribal culture, a factor which can make them seem a little (or a lot) less Indian. The point I wish to make here is that such scenarios as these **happen all the time for Indian people**. Intertribalism is a fact of life, as is the mixing of Indian bloodlines through intermarriage

with other Indian tribal groups and with non-Indians; MOST Indians today are mixed bloods. And yet a recurring and well-known point of contention is whether a certain individual is Indian enough (or Indian at all) to qualify for inclusion in one's cultural group. It seems to me that this is the place of confusion in the identity debate, when claims of cultural identity are thrown about based upon reasons that conveniently change from one conversation to the next. The many and varied criteria that have been used for determining Indian identity have seldom been satisfactory; for example, the very criteria of bloodedness is not of Indian origin at all, but an identification method imposed by the U.S. federal government. Bormann's approach, however, provides a different way to quantify cultural/group elements, and perhaps offers new ways to talk about the identity issues facing Native America.

The clearest example I could find of one Indian author seeking to write other Indian authors outside the tipi wall is seen in texts of Elizabeth Cook-Lynn that attack mixed-blood Indian writers. Cook-Lynn does not hesitate to draw lines of Indian identity starkly, based on community and also along the issues of place and culture. Cook-Lynn is perhaps the best known "tribal" voice in the discipline. By tribal I mean Indians who emphasize Indian nations by contrasting them to other cultures, in particular to the mainstream society. Tribalists emphasize indigenous identity and goals, such as the rights of Indians on reservations, and even activism for the sake of those objectives; they pay attention to features that are felt to best represent the interests of Indians: being fullblood, speaking the language, living on the reservation, sovereignty and indigenous land and legal rights, usually concerning Indians on the local level, on reservations. In other words, tribalists forward each of the themes I have characterized in this essay as features of the Indian Story. However, there seems to me to be a facet of the tribal rhetoric that does not necessarily seek to **build** the Indian story and rhetorical community, but seeks only to attack, to tear down.

In a special issue of American Indian Quarterly (on "Writing About American Indians"), Elizabeth Cook-Lynn discusses "American Indian

Intellectualism and the New Indian Story"[52]. Cook-Lynn sounds like Swisher when she states that it is problematic that "the greatest body of acceptable telling of the Indian story is still in the hands of non-Natives" (58). But her writing takes on an entirely different tone as she points out Euro-american influence and even exploitation of Indian ideas in popular literature, children's literature, and biographies.

> American writers have never hesitated to plunge into literary fields of exotic origin and call them their own. Thus, the borrowing and trading of literary kinds has flourished....Anything is usable. The chant. Religious ritual. Coyote. Mother Earth. There is some feeble effort on the part of many thoughtful artists to connect indigenous literary traditions with the remarkable "trickster" figure but, for the most part, these often seem superficial or exploitative. (59)

Cook-Lynn finally and particularly trains her sights on the academic scholarship of "writers who call themselves mixed-bloods" (67). She caustically indicts mixed-blood writings for offering too "few useful expressions of resistance and opposition to the colonial history at the core of Indian/White relations" (67). She is angered mixed-blood writers communicate in their texts that "a return to tribal sovereignty on Indian homelands seems to be a lost cause" (69), promoting the "notion of the failure of tribal governments as Native institutions and of sovereignty as a concept" (67). Cook-Lynn charges that mixed-bloods do not "contribute substantially to intellectual debates of First Nationhood" (68).

> Mixed-blood literary instruction may be viewed as a kind of liberation phenomenon or, more specifically, a deconstruction of a tribal-nation past, hardly an intellectual movement that can claim a continuation of the tribal communal story or an ongoing tribal literary tradition....They are **failed intellectuals** because they have not lived up to the responsibility of transmitting knowledge between certain diverse blocs of society. This would suggest that the mixed-blood literary movement arose as a result of the assimilation inherent in cultural studies driven by American politics and imperialism. (69-70, my emphasis)

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[52]Another article with a similar theme by Cook-Lynn is "Who Stole Native American Studies," published in the Wicazo Sa Review in Spring 1997.

Cook-Lynn gives a list of writers who meet this description of the failed intellectual: Gerald Vizenor heads the list, followed by Louis Owens, Wendy Rose, Maurice Kenny, Michael Dorris, Diane Glancy, Betty Bell, Thomas King, Joe Bruchac, and Paula Gunn Allen.

Cook-Lynn goes directly after Vizenor's postmodernism. Vizenor's concept of a "postindian," or a modern Indian who finds a way through language to resolve the cultural differences that have always plagued Indian-white relations, is for Cook-Lynn a self-serving and unjustified approach for Indians, one which leans too much on a western ideology.

> The mixed-blood literature is characterized by excesses of individualism. The "I," the "me" story, and publishing projects by university and commercial presses in the "life-story" genre are the result more of the dominance of patriarchy most noted in American society than of tribalness. (69)

The mixed-blood approach doesn't fit with Cook-Lynn's view of what is and should be important to Indian people and therefore should not be tolerated. Cook-Lynn clearly articulates her own view of the purpose of Indian scholarship as "**the essential nature of intellectual work and critical reflection for American Indians is to challenge the politics of dispossession inherent in public policy toward Indian nationhood**" (71). Since they are not engaged in this agenda, the mixed-blood writers are viewed by Cook-Lynn as "puzzling" and perhaps even "dangerous" (71). She accuses "the literary people who are contributing to the Indian affairs debate in academia" as individuals who are largely ones with "no stake in First Nation ideology" (71).

> Their desire to absolve themselves of their responsibility to speak to that ideology, their self interest in job-seeking, promotion, publishing, tenure, and economic security dismisses the seriousness of Native intellectual work and its connection to politics. (71)

It's important that Cook-Lynn's topic is intellectualism; she is making a direct plea for how a really Indian way of conducting scholarship is to be performed (which is the main objective of American Indian studies), and the point she wishes to make is that the actions of mixed-bloods grow out of a western rather than Indian tradition.

Cook-Lynn utilizes the three Indian Story themes, sometimes quite convincingly, in her tearing down of mixed-blood Indian writers. Note her use of the term sovereignty, and how she concentrates on Indian homelands. Cook-Lynn herself withdrew from a mainstream academic institution and returned to her home reservation, from which she now writes and edits a significant American Indian Studies journal, the Wicazo Sa Review. Note her concern with "intellectual debates of first nationhood" or "the tribal communal story or an ongoing tribal literary tradition," aspects of the second theme of Indian culture. It's worth recalling that it was Cook-Lynn I cited who praised Ray Young Bear's Meskwaki writing in the previous section. Note Cook-Lynn's preoccupation with the business of tribal governments and tribal communities. Cook-Lynn's choice to concentrate her attack on the "mixed-bloods" reveals a buying into the belief that it is the "full-bloods" that best represent Indian identity. But notice also Cook-Lynn's chosen and always foregrounded stance against the insidious influences of the European mainstream, her emphasis on colonialism and "assimilation...driven by American politics and imperialism." She considers mixed-blood writers to be individualistic and even "dangerous" to the communal tribal agenda, in which they "have no stake." In other words, there seems to be no way around concluding that Cook-Lynn believes mixed-bloods to not be Indian at all, but to be, effectively, white. And the story Cook-Lynn is telling about Indians seems to be one in which Indians may only perceive themselves in direct opposition to white America, since an Indian-white relationship must necessarily be a jealously either-or proposition. Cook-Lynn's definition of Indian concentrates on "what is not" rather than the "what is," using the themes I have outlined in this essay primarily to point out the aspects of Indians that are not-white. Cook-Lynn goes on to add as further criteria for being Indian the preoccupation with pointing out how Indians are different from and cannot trust whites. In other words, for Cook-Lynn, the Indian who does not take up these causes is not Indian at all.

As tribalists seem to draw the boundary lines so tightly, and to write mixed-bloods outside of the category of being Indian, Bormann's symbolic convergence framework may serve to point out what is

happening here. To the extent that Cook-Lynn can argue and convince her readers that mixed-bloods have failed in the role of intellectual leadership, then she has not only managed to write Vizenor and other postindians OUT of the tipi, she has also managed to more firmly secure her own and other tribal writers' sense of belonging INSIDE the cultural boundary. But there are today simply too many Indians who are mixed-bloods for a radical nationalism such as that forwarded by Cook-Lynn to work, and the new opportunities for voice that Indian academics are seeing in mainstream society is due at least in part (a significant part) to the efforts over the years of people such as Vizenor and Momaday. Is it healthy to exclude such people? Or more importantly, is it INDIAN (based on the themes I have shared, and especially the last theme, which looks to build Indian community) to do so? The suspicion and cynicism that characterizes the tribal voice—where does that come from? Where did we as Indians learn that?

Albert Memmi, writing on the topic of colonialism, informs what may be going on in Cook-Lynn's tribalism. Memmi describes at length what transpires in the psyche of both the Colonizers and the Colonized in situations like that found in the historical case of our nation. Memmi concludes that an individual existing under the shadow of colonialism must ultimately make a choice between two options: to assimilate or to resist. The former is not really a satisfactory choice, says Memmi, and the latter carries with it a necessary violence.

> Assimilation being abandoned, the colonized's liberation must be carried out through a recovery of self and of autonomous dignity. Attempts at imitating the colonizer required self-denial; the colonizer's rejection is the indispensable prelude to self-discovery. That accusing and annihilating image must be shaken off; oppression must be attacked boldly since it is impossible to go around it. (128)

To accomplish this cultural refusal, Memmi goes on to note, "the colonized's xenophobia and even a certain racism, must make their return" (129-130). Racism is a harsh term, but Memmi uses it purposefully to explain the severity necessary to an escape from colonialism. So, Cook-Lynn's extreme position may very well have a valid

reason and purpose for drawing the boundaries so starkly, and for establishing its identity by telling a story of community that stands only in negative relationship to another community.

The relevant observation here is that terms are slippery, and writers sometimes use Indian Story themes to make sweeping statements about identity, using certain ones in certain ways when it is convenient to make a point, but not always with consistency. For example, why doesn't the list of disapproved writers given by Cook-Lynn include N. Scott Momaday, or James Welch, or others in the rather large number of other Indian authors who might also fit into Cook-Lynn's mixed-blood category? Does it have something to do with their accomplishments? There is left, falling in between the extremes of "full-bloods" and the kind of person that may have some loose claim to Indian blood but is really only concerned with serving themselves, a huge segment of the Indian population (the center of the bell curve). Folks found away from home by necessity but not desire. People who, for practical reasons, speak English as their first (or only) language, or who may not know their relations, or have never sweated, or do not dance. Individuals who make a distinct effort to maintain their connections to the Indian community, but who also live mostly among white people. Do they qualify as Indian? How? On what basis?

Bormann's story theme analysis very possibly gives us a way to handle the dynamics that exist between the people of the group that is American Indian country, and to talk about these identity issues in a constructive way. For example, it is possible that Cook-Lynn's indictment of mixed-bloods carries to an extreme a single aspect of the Indian story to the exclusion of its other elements. Perhaps the SETTING mandated by Indian historical circumstances is being **over**emphasized in the consideration of how present-day Indian characters should act. It seems that at the very least some kind of contradiction exists in the use of the Indian theme of COMMUNITY by tribal writers like Cook-Lynn, resulting in a dissonance entering into the American Indian story and causing disunity instead of unity within hearers and repeaters of the story. It seems to me the nationalism of the tribal voice may not be driven as much by a motivation that focuses on the community of Indian people and

seeks to bring them together, as by one that focuses primarily on **another** community altogether (non-Indians), and seeks to draw precise and inevitably hostile lines about where Indian Country ends and white space begins, for the primary purpose of making sure nobody crosses. I wonder if such an agenda is feasible or even possible in our day, and more importantly, if it's a good way for Indian people to spend their time and energies, or a good thing to focus on as they seek to build Indianness.

Bormann's theory also allows the possibility of more than one Story, as a result of the demands of more than a single rhetorical community. A conflict between perceived stories could very well be the result of overlap and **confusion** with other stories. Indians may very well be unable to escape the shadow of the white mainstream—especially because of the way that mainstream handed history down—despite the more recent professed regret for those actions. Tribalists may invoke an important theme of the Indian Story, but at the same time, that theme may serve to obscure another essential theme, or the overall story itself. And to be fair, my own reading of the tribal voice may also be overemphasizing one aspect or theme of the Indian story over another.

These are difficult questions. It has not been my purpose here to say that Indians don't have anything to be angry or cry about; we do. Nor am I suggesting that all should be sanguine, that "anything goes"; I'm not. Nor am I saying that we don't need voices like that of Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, to remind us of our situation and challenge us to fight for something better; we do. But I am interested in seeking a balance of some reasonable kind, and I believe the Indian story has strengths that can be focused on, leading to an identity and subjectivity for Indian people that may have been missing to this point.

Is it an Indian story? Look for fellowship, camaraderie, and mission based upon and with other Indian people. An Indian cannot be an Indian alone. Community is an essential theme of the Indian story.

Conclusion—Story vs. Story, and Rhetorical Vision

The previous section sought to establish that ALL modern Indian stories will contain the three themes of Place, Culture, and Community, and will foreground these themes or at least will never overlook them as essential criteria for identifying who is Indian and who is not. In a sense the three Indian story themes are all the same: *knowledge* resides in the heads of a *community* that lives and has lived on *the land*—the reservations. However, in our modern world, the boundaries of the reservations have moved outward as Indian people have moved away from their origins, both figuratively and literally.

Modern American Indian people face daily a situation that is true of no other ethnic population. Indians are somewhat like the Europeans and others who came to this country in that they are now displaced from the old lands and ways, but are very **unlike** those who immigrated in another way: Indians are unable to return to a separate and distinct "old country" or "motherland" to meet with the folks who are still there, distant relatives who have maintained their culture untainted by American intrusion and influence, people unmarked and undiluted by a hyphenated designation. For Indian people, nearly all of a continent of homeland is occupied by an entire other race, who have invested their vistas with a whole set of their own stories and culture. Only a few pockets of lands remain for Indians (and many of those reservations are land to which they were removed), hardly sufficient to provide the kind of cultural sustenance that it takes to keep the huge diaspora of Indian people connected to their ancient ways of thinking and doing. It is no wonder that those few lands, and the communities and ways which live there, are so prized by Native America.

It should be no surprise, either, that Indians from many different cultural mindsets band together to FIGHT FOR the land, culture and community of Indian country. Stories **must** be told to reify the lines between Indians and the American mainstream, to establish boundary lines of identity in order to hang onto the aspects of Indianness that we have, and to recoup as much as we can of what was lost. Indians have seized the opportunities of the day to finally tell the Indian story the way they feel it should be told, and the told story is necessarily different from

the story that has historically passed for the Indian narrative. As a matter of fact, it is this necessity—the paucity and humiliation of that previous story—that plays a major shaping role in the new narrative of Indians told by Indians.

If Bormann is correct, that is, if stories are told to advance the world views of groups, then the old story of Indians can be seen to play a HUGE role in forwarding the group world view of the United States of America. Indians have long chafed under that narrative, but until recently had little-to-no opportunity to voice an alternative account. But now there is a new climate, new resources, new rules...and, not surprisingly, a new story. There are actually **two** Indian Stories, the old one and a new one, and since they conflict, it should be expected that the new story will have a hard edge to it, and that much of the "action" in the storytelling will directly revolve around issues of identity: who belongs, who doesn't belong, who gets to tell the story. Considering the historical context of oppression and colonialist appropriation, it should startle no one that the new stories are extremist, reactionary, and oppositional to white America and especially to the old Indian narrative.

But another important question remains for Indian people: What story of themselves will they tell? What account will we choose to represent ourselves and to lead us in our future walk, especially since that route necessarily runs through mainstream America? One group in particular, the young discipline of American Indian studies, which may be said to be approaching its adolescence, is highly charged with activity and hopefulness for a promising and productive future. The decisions that are now being made about where and how identity boundaries are drawn will have a significant and lasting effect upon the desired success of the field. What story will Indian authors write?[53]

It's not as if this story can be created out of whole cloth. Bormann, while arguing for the capability of storying to lead and direct future activity and decision-making of a group's membership, also points to the need for any story to be drawn from and consistent with the accumulated

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[53]A thought that initially opened up this research was: is there an Indian story possible that is not in the shadow of the white man, that does not begin with the telling of the victimization of Indian people, that does not carry a chip on its shoulder, that is subjective rather than subjugated [makes the Indian a subject]?

Story in order for that telling to find acceptance, to be listened to. It is old ways that already exist, and must be adhered to, which comprise an overall story, one that accounts for an entire identity of a group or culture such as the American Indian People, or the academic community of American Indian studies.

And finally, one last piece of Bormann's theory may serve to inform the Indian identity discussion. Remember that he says a Rhetorical Vision is the end product of a group or culture's identity-making pursuit, the "unified putting-together of the various scripts which gives the participants a broader view of things" (8). By the time a rhetorical vision results, stories are no more just stories, but a way for group members to "explain and evaluate...new events and bring them into line with the overall values and emotions" of the group (8). Types and allusions to types (triggers) show that fantasy themes have been shared by a community to the point of creating for them a rhetorical vision, says Bormann, one unified enough to have become their social reality.

> Rhetorical visions are often integrated by the sharing of a dramatizing message that contains a master analogy. The master analogy pulls the various elements together into a more or less elegant and meaningful whole....In this instance, the rhetorical community has reached such a high level of symbolic maturity that the cryptic allusion can be not just to details of fantasy themes and types but to **a total coherent view** of an aspect of their social maturity. (8, my emphasis)

As I mentioned in the previous section, both reservation and urban Indian groups can be viewed as examples of what Bormann is calling the rhetorical community, as can the American Indian studies discipline. Rhetorical communities are simply those groups who have gone through Bormann's process of symbolic convergence, and who now share in telling and retelling a set of stories that construct and embody their social reality, their identity.

So what implications does this concept of a Rhetorical Vision have for thinking and talking about the Indian story told in modern times? What IS the Indian rhetorical vision? That discussion must necessarily become the next research step and set of questions for Indian academics

interested in what I have presented here. But, perhaps the terms many Indians (such as the tribal writers) are already using can be named which function as the sort of cryptic allusions that Bormann describes above. Certainly the term sovereignty functions in this way, and carries tremendous currency for Indian people. The same could be said of the various terms Indians use to designate themselves, terms like indigenous and native and even, Indian[54]. Certainly, as Indians pursue (continue) the building of Indian identity, I would suggest some work go into the naming of a rhetorical vision that includes the *settings* of both home and battlefield, that allows *characters* that represent the interests of unique tribal cultures and the broader category of Indians at the same time, and that promotes *actions* that carefully and specifically draw boundary lines of community, but without excluding those who have a right to still call themselves Indian.

I believe the combination of a very ancient story, with all the opportunity and potential of the new voice that Indians have found in our present day, can and does comprise a powerful overall American Indian Story. The stories we tell bring about connection, between the hearers, the tellers, and the words themselves. It is a COLLECTION of stories that is needed to circumscribe what it means to be Indian. Bormann's symbolic convergence theory offers a compelling rendering of the process for telling stories into an identity, for turning simple words into stories, and for organizing those stories into themes and rhetorical visions, so that we can talk about it all in a productive way.

I would challenge Indians, especially Indian academics, to take a closer look at the stories we tell, and to be careful to tell them responsibly. Many American Indian studies authors believe that we are ready for a new Indian critique. and the themes of the American Indian Story may very well benefit that pursuit. Let's set about seeking such a vision.

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[54]I don't think it matters anymore that "Indian" is a misnomer, although the debate of the best designation still happens across the country. But most Indians I know have never worried about the issue or sought a single "correct" term. There is a certain irony, it seems to me, in the taking over the term and making it our own. We are, simply, Ind'ns.

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CONCLUSION
MULTIPLE DIRECTIONS

My father, Jim McKinney, grew up speaking both Potawatomi and English on the Prairie Band Potawatomi reservation in Kansas. His folks (and my dad as well) had experienced the boarding schools, and understood the importance of their children's ability to handle the English language. Nevertheless, they were also steeped in culture, so they purposed to speak both languages in the home. I don't know the ratio of Potawatomi to English that was spoken in that home (Dad remembers it as about half-and-half), nor do I know if my grandparents understood the future impact of their decision, but I count this bi-lingual environment that they created a factor of my personal heritage that has tremendous significance.

When he was old enough, Jim McKinney left the reservation, in search of personal opportunity for advancement. He was married to a non-Indian woman while he was away in the United States Air Force. After a four year tour of duty, he brought his young wife (a Floridian who had never been more than a hundred miles from home) back to Kansas. The reality of the economic destitution of the reservation in 1954 made itself clear within eight months, and Jim McKinney gave up on being a farmer, and re-enlisted in the Air Force.

Upon his retirement from the USAF twenty years later, Jim McKinney went into the ministry. Twenty-five years hence, the Rev. Jim McKinney has now retired again, this time as a district superintendent in the Oklahoma Conference of the Indian United Methodist Church. Midway through that second career, Jim McKinney attended Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and earned a Master of Divinity degree and a Master of Religious Education degree. This, despite the fact that, back on the Potawatomi reservation, he had dropped out of school after the eighth grade. He is proud of his achievements, especially those degrees. And he has a right to be, because Jim McKinney's education achievements make him an unusual Prairie Band Potawatomi man.

I am Jim McKinney's son, and a product of experiences in the many places that he took us as I was growing up. As a youth, Dad shared the

Indian culture with us kids, but not usually in a direct or forced fashion. As a young man, especially since I was raised in a military melting pot and then among many non-Indian communities as my dad preached for various congregations, I didn't particularly frame my own identity in terms of being Indian, but I believe the foundations of that identity were solidly laid in my childhood. However, midway through my undergraduate college years at Baker University in Baldwin City, Kansas, I approached my dad and handed him a box of several items, including a beaded headband I had worn throughout much of high school and the loom I had beaded it on. I told him that I didn't need those things anymore. I was headed off into the world, in search of personal opportunity for advancement. I don't remember that conversation, but my dad tells the story like those words really hurt him, and I wonder if he didn't see more than a little of himself in that departing teenager, his third child and only son.

Like my dad, I married a non-Indian, and for at least ten years thought of little else than making a life for myself, for her and our children, with little regard for situation of Indian people overall. I finished a four year undergraduate program in five and a half years. I went into the ministry (yes, the parallels to my father's life surprise even me) and completed an intensive two year ministry training program (non-degreed) in another state. I returned to Kansas and worked in several towns and ministry roles, taking along the way several graduate courses in secondary educational administration. In 1989, I moved my family to Ames, Iowa, to begin a campus ministry. Within four years, I left the ministry and, having completed an MA and begun work on a PhD, I was finally vocationally focused on being an academic. Recently, as a lark, I counted up the years to reveal the frightening fact that thirty of my forty years have been spent in school. I'm even more unusual for an enrolled Prairie Band Potawatomi than my father, but my circumstances serve as partial explanation of how it happened that I've managed to get so much education experience.

It was in Ames, in a city (and school) with almost no Indian people, that I began to be called upon to speak to people in the capacity of being Indian (since I had self-identified myself as such). These experiences I

first rejected because I didn't feel qualified, but after a period of sincere reflection, and out of a sense of service and obligation, I accepted the role and did the best I could to educate the many non-Indians in Ames and its surrounding communities regarding the need for changing stereotypical images of Indians into a more real and respectful understanding of native America. This was my first reality check on Indian identity, and on its heels followed several more experiences that compelled me into a greater awareness of my cultural heritage. First, I needed to choose a research focus for my graduate work, and my own multicultural struggle presented itself as an obvious and a viable choice. Second, I had begun participating and even teaching in my university's American Indian studies program, a role for which I was NOT prepared and an opportunity which I would not have been given—except for the simple fact that I was Indian, semi-capable (a doctoral student), willing, and at Iowa State (an institution desperate for native personnel). Third, I had begun work on a Potawatomi language project with my father, who had moved back to the Prairie Band reservation community. Finally, my third child, a son, had been born. Funny how that gets you thinking.

These dynamics converged and drove me before them into an accelerated tack into an awareness of my Indian identity. This rediscovery is reflected in chapter one. Due to reflexive academic theoretical/ methodological approaches, I have been privileged to devote my academic and professional interests toward study and work with Indian people. The line of this dissertation research has provided incredible opportunity to explore my own experiences in the academy and the challenges that other Indian academics are facing, and mostly to focus on the practice of embracing multiple instead of single directions in an academic pursuit.

How does "multiple threading" play out in the life of a modern Indian person? My own experiences serve as an example.

My grandparents chose not one direction over the other, but made both a possibility when they purposed to raise their children in a bi-lingual home setting. My father chose multiple lines in journeying away from home, and then in journeying back again to the reservation community, where he now lives. He also found it best in his church work

to combine aspects of Christian and Indian religious practices; he even switched during that second career to a denomination that would allow the use of Indian cultural approaches. My father also found use in the offerings of higher education, earning his own degree and also inviting me, a non-Potawatomi-speaker, to bring the resources and techniques that I have gained in the university to bear upon the problem of a declining Potawatomi language. Our collaboration in this area is beginning to see real progress.

In my own career as a graduate student, there were many times where the academy demanded more attention, more focus; it is standard practice, I believe, for a person attempting to attain a PhD to do nothing but that work for several years, and many never finish because of some of the tensions I have named in this dissertation. I, on the other hand, though it meant a slower academic track, was able to divide my time and attention between important studies AND other important things that I could not afford to ignore: my family, Indian students at Iowa State, the ISU American Indian Studies program, the Potawatomi language project. The downside, of course, of this multi-threaded approach is lack of concentration and momentum for any one of the threads. Many never finish their degree due to the draw of such outside interests. Each semester, whenever the low emotional point came, I was tempted to give up and go home. Nevertheless, I am convinced that splitting my attention gave me a better academic experience and degree in the end.

I also pursued a multiple line in my choice of research, in which I sought to merge my interests and efforts. Another way to say that is this: I sought throughout to keep my options open, never to take a direction that would mean I had painted myself into a corner and left myself with only one alternative. For example, a PhD enables me to pursue any academic career I find interesting, and a degree in communications leaves me with many teaching and research options: English or American Indian studies or even some other field. I can now choose any NON-academic career as well, perhaps return to the ministry, or pursue some other line of work that would be useful to the folks back home (such as grant writing or work with computers and the world wide web). This

sense of freedom is found in merging training with experience, and interests and priorities with effort.

I would point out one last time that the example I offer here is only one person's experience. As a matter of fact, since these essays have functioned as windows on my thinking over the years, and since I've now had a chance to RE-think some of the issues, I find a number of places where even I am not really represented by the generalized "Indian Academic" that I have written in these chapters. (Not to mention the straw man of the western academy that I said I would try not to set up, and then did.) There are many and varied cultural influences and personal experiences and personalities that mix together to make up each unique individual. Therefore, I am not suggesting my own experience or approach as a model for all Indian academics to follow. However, I do believe that multiple threading is a useful strategy and a way to get more things done (obligations met) in the necessarily limited time frame that Indian people face as they pursue academic degrees. I want to point out that an Indian student does not have to choose only between one thing or the other (especially based on advice some single-minded academic program may give them), but can often choose to do both the necessary academics AND the essential work they have prioritized elsewhere in their life.

Having made that hedge, I would still, as a final example of multiple threading in the life of an Indian academic, like to point toward several future directions that this study opens up for consideration and that I will be taking in my professional career. These directions are also important to consider because they are a discussion of how this line of research may be extended. What are the implications of story theme criticism and multiple threading for my own work and research? The three Indian Story themes that I name in chapter four certainly find substance in my own work: Place is importantly reflected in chapters one and two of this dissertation, and I have gone full circle by moving home to Kansas, from which the final touches of this paper are typed and printed; Culture is mainly livened in my personal experience through the language project that I continue to conduct with my father, and we are both happy I now live close enough to accelerate my language learning curve, so that I may

soon no longer "sound like an Anglo" when I attempt Potawatomi; Community is most importantly manifested in my life as I begin to put into practice the matters I have studied in the last ten years of graduate school. I have begun a new teaching career at Haskell Indian Nations University, and am delighted at the prospect of working with the many Indian students (academics) there.

The actual directions in which I will travel at Haskell are yet to be revealed, but the completion of this degree allows me to finally formally combine several threads that to this point have been kept fairly separated. In particular, the Potawatomi language project now gets to move from the periphery to center stage. The nearest Indian reservation to Haskell is that of the Prairie Band Potawatomi (not a coincidence, but another example of creative multiple threading). Haskell has both the resources and the interest to conduct meaningful research into the Potawatomi language, culture, and community. They also have a solid relationship with the Prairie Band community itself (as well as the other Potawatomi bands), to insure that directions taken in research reflect the needs and priorities of the Potawatomi themselves.

Similarly, there are other projects that I have been thinking about for a long time which now can receive the attention they deserve. In particular, I am interested in the prospect of using multimedia to teach Indian languages. Some aspects of Indian thought have been in many ways unrepresentable until recent advances due to computers have bypassed print technology limitations. For example, one Indian author, Greg Cajete talks about seven sacred directions. In addition to the usually mentioned four directions of East, South, West, and North, Cajete adds these three: Above (sky), Below (earth), and the Center, where all the axes meet. Cajete's model is impossible to represent on paper, which is limited to two dimensions. However, in a virtual environment, where three dimensions are the norm, this Indian approach to education can find expression. Likewise, in my own language work, I have found print to be a limitation instead of a benefit to teaching and learning Potawatomi. There is no standard orthography for Potawatomi, an oral language, and any attempt to write the language down is perceived by Potawatomi speakers to be unnatural and constraining. Orthography issues are also often

occasions for competition and disunity in effort; much time is wasted on arguing about a matter that isn't really important to the language itself. Multimedia, on the other hand, requires only the makers of the language software to struggle with unintuitive and analytical constructions of the language. End users can interact with the language as Indian elders have always taught it, by hearing it and perhaps by seeing graphic or even real (i.e., video or photographs) images. There are many problems with this theory, of course, which is exactly why the research is so exciting. My primary goal is to get young Potawatomis and other Indian researchers involved in the work.

Finally, there are as well many implications for the ideas I have presented in the essays contained in this dissertation, as well as much work needed by Indian academic writers to check and add to this research effort. For example, connections between the nonlinearity of hypertext and Indian indirectness should be explored. Bormann and other narrative theories should be applied to Indian texts. There should be more characterizations of American Indian studies disciplinary voices, as I have attempted to do here with chapters three and four, and there should be as well a more elaborate investigation into the politics of Indian discourse and AIS disciplinary discourse. There really needs to be further effort to make the Indian identity discussion a healthy and open one. We also need a sincere effort at a sophisticated and responsible academic Indian critique overall, like that which Warrior calls for. More challenges of standard academic research and reporting practices, from an Indian perspective, would be good for all involved. And finally, experimentation in the use of autobiography and other writing genres in academic writing could bring about great transformations in the usefulness of those texts, by both academics and others outside the academy. This establishing of connections across academic boundaries is particularly necessary for the good of Indian people. All of these suggestions involve drawing threads from various places, across boundaries and territorial lines of academic disciplines, professional interests and priorities, and accepted (stuck-in-a-rut) assumptions. I challenge Indian academics to take the lead in such efforts, for their own good and for the good of the academy.

Based on Jim McKinney's response to the progress I have made this last year toward actually completing this degree, I believe he is prouder of the PhD I am earning than even of his own achievements in education. My awareness of that pride as well as a heightened sense of the greater Indian situation that I have gained through my work fills me with an obligation to those younger in education than myself. What would this sense of obligation compel me to suggest to the Indian considering graduate study? The six major sections of this dissertation can be summarized into the following recommendations I might make:

- As my introduction indicates, there are multiple avenues and opportunities that should be considered, not simply single tracks.
- Indian people might consider a return to where they come from instead of just surging ahead toward what they think they are going after.
- Do not privilege a single (i.e., the established) methodology or approach.
- Similarly, do not privilege a single voice in your pursuit, but look for multiple perspectives as your counsel; also, as chapter three suggests, it never hurts to look into and through what is being said for the ulterior politics that are certainly there.
- The lesson of chapter four is to look closely into the available texts (which take all shapes and sizes) to find the Story there: Observe and construct unifying themes toward a socially aware and balanced identity.
- Finally, this conclusion recommends putting your considered thought into action by moving forward...but in multiple directions (keeping your options open, do use what you have learned in your study).

I did not find it easy to finish this degree, nor do I believe that these small conclusions comprise some sort of academic shortcut. No such thing exists. Every year I found a reason (sometimes several, and most of them good) to walk away from attempting the work. However, helpful people and a benevolent Spirit enabled me each time to survive the crises, and I now share with those that ask that it isn't intelligence that earns the highest degree the academy grants, it is perseverance.

More than ever, I attempt to walk a careful balance between the two cultures in which I am situated, and I am compelled to believe that my lengthy juggling experience may be of some use to other Indian academics. That hope makes of me a writer, not because I am convinced I have such an extraordinary gift, but because I have been extraordinarily blessed along the way and now recognize my debt to those who are early in the struggle. To those strugglers I offer my story as encouragement and wishes for the blessings I have enjoyed.

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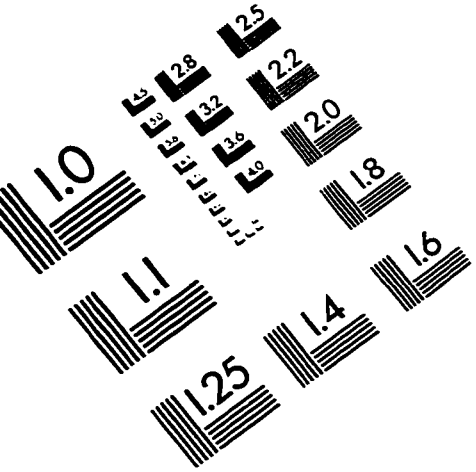

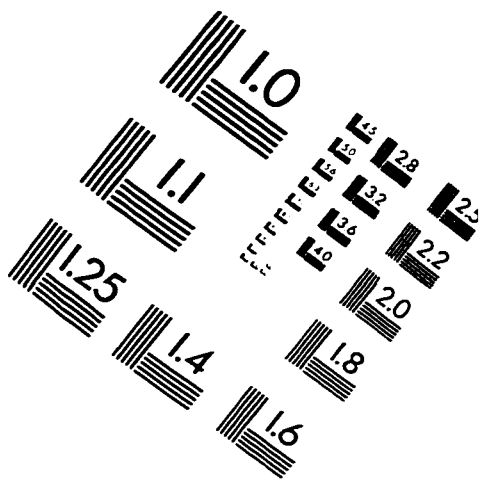

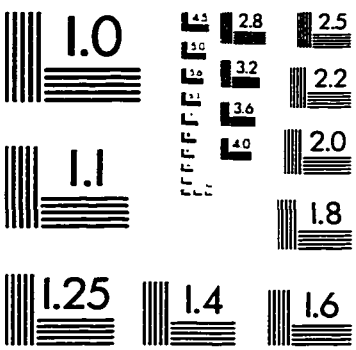

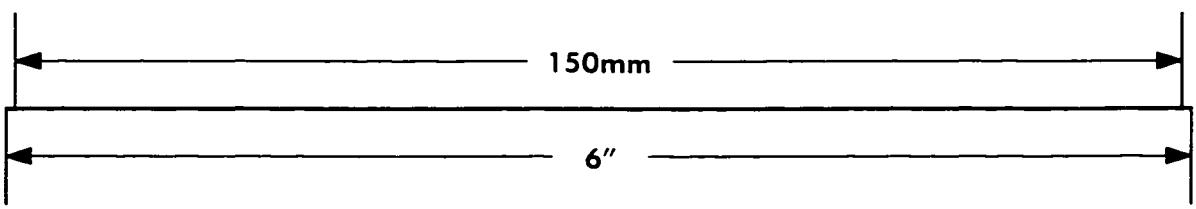

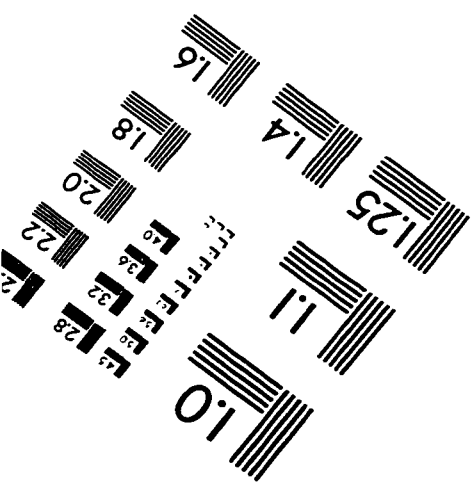

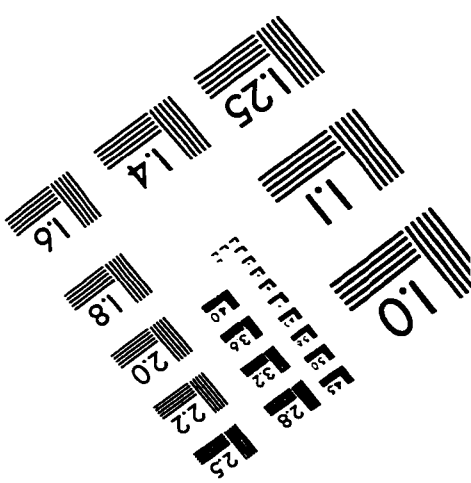

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